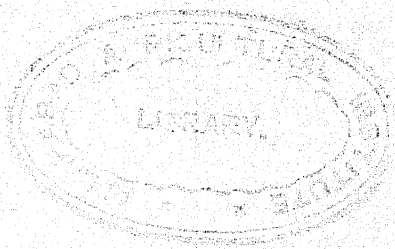


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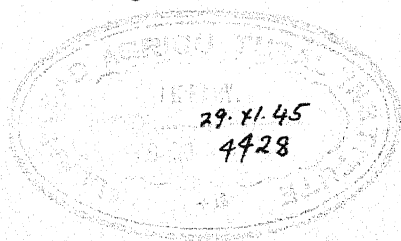
EVERY-DAY RELIGION

By

EDWARD S. WOODS

BISHOP OF CROYDON

*Author of Modern Discipleship,
A Faith that Works, etc.*

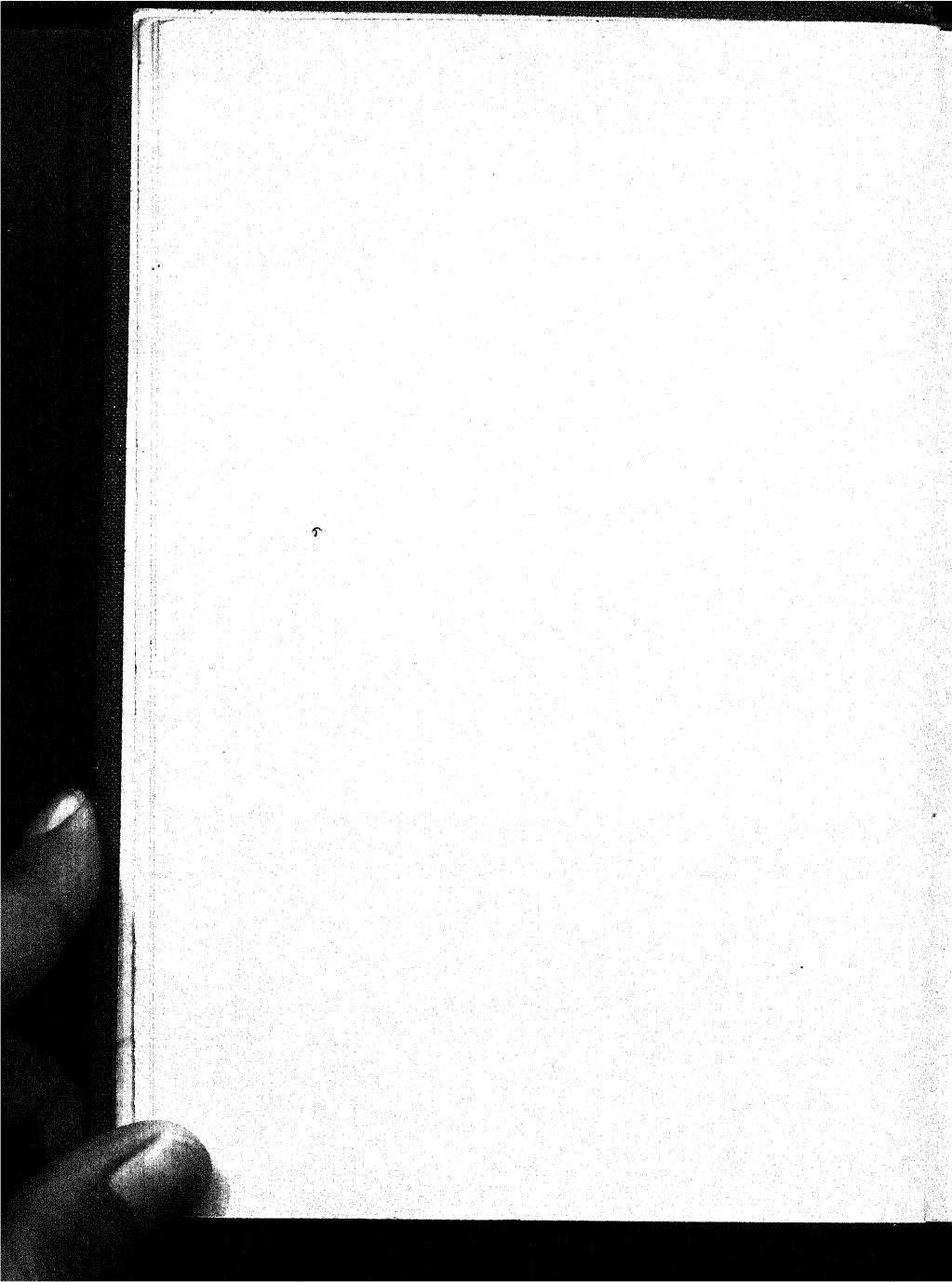


STUDENT CHRISTIAN MOVEMENT PRESS
58 Bloomsbury Street, London, W.C.1

First Published	-	-	November 1922
Second Impression	-	-	March 1923
Third Impression	-	-	June 1925
Fourth Impression	-	-	March 1927
Fifth Impression	-	-	October 1929
Sixth, revised impression	(Torch Library)		September 1933

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN BY
THE STANHOPE PRESS LTD.
ROCHESTER : : KENT

TO
MY DEAREST AND BEST
WHO IN THE INTIMACIES OF FAMILY LIFE
HAVE HELPED ME TO UNDERSTAND
THE FIRST PRINCIPLES OF
"EVERY-DAY" RELIGION



PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

ELEVEN years ago I wrote a book called *Modern Discipleship* (of which a new and revised edition will be ready shortly), in which an attempt was made to set forth, quite simply, some of the meanings of Christian discipleship to-day, with special emphasis on the "inner life." Ever since then I have cherished the hope of writing a sequel, which should, so to say, start from the other end and deal with some of the practical implications of Christian discipleship in the field of common work-a-day life. Such a sequel is attempted in this present volume. It has naturally been impossible to cover all the ground, and I am aware of sad inadequacy in the treatment of those subjects which have been selected for inclusion; nevertheless I send the book forth in the hope that it may inspire some who read it with a fresh conviction that the only possible solution of all our difficulties, as a society and as individuals, is to be found in Jesus Christ, and with a new determination to explore personally and adventurously the way of living which He has opened up for mankind.

Some of the chapters were written in the peace of holiday time; but most of them were penned in places, and under conditions, very far from holiday quiet, such as trains and station waiting-rooms, in the odd half-hours of a busy life. Perhaps such variation in the circumstances of the actual writing

is not inappropriate to a book which seeks to bridge the gulf between the cloister and the market-place.

The gist of Chapter IV was given as an address at a Communicants' Convention in preparation for the Westminster Mission (1922), and appears in the published report of the Proceedings of that Convention. Portions of Chapters VI, XII, and XIII, recast and amplified, will be found included in a series of essays on Liberal Evangelicalism to be published shortly.

Grateful acknowledgment is made of permission to make use of copyright material from Messrs. Blackwood & Sons for the quotation from *Stradivarius*; Messrs. Macmillan for the poem by Mr. Blackwood; the executors of the late George Macdonald; and to Miss Evelyn Underhill.

To those friends who have helped in the writing of this book by their encouragement, counsel and prayer (two of whom have also, in their goodness, shared in the labour of proof-reading), I would tender a gratitude which cannot be adequately expressed in words. If this book should under God contribute anything, however small, to the building of His Kingdom, they will, I know, find in that fact the recompense that they would wish.

EDWARD S. WOODS.

Cambridge,
October 1922.

PREFACE TO THE SIXTH EDITION

THE issue of this book in a completely new edition (in the "Torch" library) has given me the opportunity to revise some parts of it and bring other parts up to date. The book was written soon after the Great War, and it rather bears the stamp of that period; but I have not attempted to re-write it. Obviously there is much more to be said on many of these topics of "every-day Religion," some of which I have tried to say in a second book on similar lines, *A Faith That Works* (first published in 1929). I still cherish the dream of producing a sequel to these books which will describe not so much the land to be watered as the spring from which the living waters flow.

EDWARD CROYDON.

The Vicarage,
Croydon.
Holy Week 1933.

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"Teach me, my God and King,
In all things Thee to see;
And what I do in anything
To do it as for Thee.

A man that looks on glass,
On it may stay his eye;
Or if he pleaseth, through it pass,
And then the heaven espy.

All may of Thee partake;
Nothing can be so mean,
Which with this tincture, 'for Thy sake,'
Will not grow bright and clean.

A servant with this clause
Makes drudgery divine;
Who sweeps a room, as for Thy laws,
Makes that and the action fine.

This is the famous stone
That turneth all to gold;
For that which God doth touch and own
Cannot for less be told."

GEORGE HERBERT.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY: CHRISTIANITY A WAY
OF LIVING

"Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven."—*St. Matthew* vii, 21.

"Whatsoever ye do, in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus."—*Colossians* iii, 17.

"It is the glory of religion not to be set apart from life, but to permeate it powerfully."—H. C. KING.

"Christianity is the projection into the world of the lines along which Christ lived. It is a duplicating in modern life of the spirit, the method, and the aims of Jesus, a following through the world the very footprints that He left behind."—HENRY DRUMMOND.

"The long history of European Christianity, if it ever comes to be written, will be the history of a submerged and hidden movement—the tracing of the course of a pure but tenuous stream of living water which has refreshed the souls of innumerable men and women who have penetrated to its secret recesses, but has but seldom emerged into the open, to flow through the broad and dusty cities where the world's main activities are carried on."—A. E. ZIMMERN.

"Grant us the will to fashion as we feel,
Grant us the strength to labour as we know,
Grant us the purpose, ribb'd and edged with steel,
To strike the blow.
Knowledge we ask not—knowledge Thou hast lent,
But, Lord, the will—there lies our bitter need;
Give me to build above the deep intent
The deed, the deed."

JOHN DRINKWATER.

"Faith is not belief in spite of evidence, but life in scorn of consequence."—ANON.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY: CHRISTIANITY A WAY OF LIVING

At a little town in Belgium, some weeks after the Armistice, I happened to be present at a gathering of officers who had come together to listen to an address by a distinguished Army Chaplain. Some seventy turned up, and the Chaplain accomplished what seemed to me the remarkable feat of holding them spellbound for more than an hour while he expounded Christianity in his own vigorous, picturesque and inimitable style. Among other things he spoke of the evolution of the Padre during the war, and the significance of that evolution. In the early days, he said, at Mons and Ypres and elsewhere the Padre's presence at the front had always occasioned a certain surprise; men in the combatant units could not quite make out what he was doing there, unless it were to bury the dead. Only gradually did it dawn on men's minds that a parson's work has to do quite as much with living as with dying.

That unthinking conception of the Padre as a sort of glorified undertaker illustrates a fact of our day which should be well pondered, the fact that religion "has fallen into a rut of irrelevance to life." And perhaps the chief task for the Christians of our generation is to get their religion back again

from life's circumference to its centre, to experience and to demonstrate its entire relevance to all the concerns and activities of human beings. The task can never be an easy one, for just as the Churches are prone to imprison the Christ in creeds and stained-glass windows, so there is in every man who is at all religious a queer instinct to rail off a department of his life and call it religion. Within that circle are dumped all manner of things which are supposed to belong there: church-going, pious reading, meetings, missions, parsons, charities, and the general paraphernalia of organized religion. But all the while the real business of life is carried on on the other side of the fence. All the thousand details of engrossing daily work, all the personal relationships involved, all that goes on in the world around, life's interests and pleasures and recreations, its richness and colour, its gaiety and fun and laughter, its gifts and surprises, its comedies and tragedies—these are the things which form the real stuff of human living, and for too many people they have next to nothing to do with religion. Whereas to be a Christian is to find and practise a religion which is not above or aloof from these things, but is woven in with them, and so woven with them as to determine their pattern. Jesus Christ quite clearly was, and is, concerned with life in all its fullness;¹ and any religion which is "professional" and aloof and unrelated to life ought never to be called after His name. He came to show men a faith which should touch life at every

¹ Cf. Col. ii, 10: "It is in Him that you reach your full life" (Moffatt's translation).

point; His "Incarnation" can hardly mean less than that God Himself is concerned with everything human. Something of what is involved in this contact and this concern it will be the endeavour of the following chapters to unfold.

I

The desperate moral and material needs of our war-shattered world are sufficiently apparent, and there are plenty of people, outside the Churches as well as in them, who would be thankful enough to see what Christianity could do to assuage the wounds and rebuild the ruins. For it is generally recognized that history has not yet seen any considered attempt to apply Christianity to human affairs on any large scale. To quote once again G. K. Chesterton's war-time dictum—for nothing more apposite on this topic has ever been said—"Christianity has not been tried and found wanting, it has been found difficult and not tried." That is exactly the point. And there are many signs that all sorts of people, superficially perhaps materialistic and not in the least religious, do in their heart of hearts believe that Christianity is worth trying, and that in the last resort nothing else will save the situation. For they are beginning to distinguish between symptoms and causes, and to see that, unless you can find something which is potent enough to reach and eradicate innate human selfishness, to long for a new world is merely crying for the moon.

But it is not perhaps so clearly seen that if Christianity is to be applied at all it must be applied all

round. You cannot call in religion to clear up difficulties which defeat your skill, and then dispense with it in other spheres where its application might be inconvenient. To do that is to fall into the departmentalism of thought and practice which is, as we have seen, the negation of true religion. It is to be feared that such departmentalism must have nullified the effects of much fervent praying during the Great War. How grotesque to beseech God to intervene for England's victory unless you are prepared for Him to put His Hand also on England's greed and England's drink and England's vice! Yet this absolute condition of any real application of Christianity to common concerns seems to escape many intelligent people. There are those, in business and in politics, who will talk in large terms about the moral solution of world problems, but who, when it comes to the point, are not at all anxious to see too close an association between Christianity and mundane affairs. Let the Churches, they say, fight drink and vice and other specially selected moral evils; but it's "hands off" when it is a question of business, or strikes, or foreign politics.

II

It is important to emphasize, at the outset of our studies, that this conception of a Christianity which can be, and is divinely intended to be, applied to all the range of human living is a vital part of the message and the life that Jesus Christ brought to men. If one should try and sum up in a sentence

what the task was which Jesus undertook, and accomplished, it might be said that He came to show men God as He is, and to teach them a new way of living. As we shall see in further detail later on, these two sides of His task are inseparably interwoven, and much of the feebleness of our Christianity springs from a failure to grasp their close connection. If in any sense you are beginning to know God as Jesus reveals Him, that knowledge is bound to express itself in life; if you wish to explore the Christian way of living, you will fail unless you also arm yourself with His spiritual secret. It is with this moral and ethical side of "original Christianity" that we are for the moment concerned. We cannot too often or too eagerly follow the stream back to its source and seek to ascertain from Jesus Christ Himself what He really wanted men to do and to be. And the more we steep ourselves in the story of those days when He lived among men, the more evident does it become that the way of living He challenges men to adopt is something more than the "holiness" of ecclesiastics, which too often has an artificial smack about it, more also than an unattractive catalogue of virtues inculcated by the moralists. The manner of life He summons men to share reveals an extraordinarily high standard, but it is never cold and rigid and non-human; indeed wherever the spirit of what He meant is truly caught by any disciple of His, there you have a life which is warmly, joyfully human, and which imports into all human concerns and human relationships a radiance, a romance, and even a gaiety, such as are not to be had from a less

vital source. What this life is and all it involves can only be seen by those who are prepared to investigate for themselves the story of the earthly life of Jesus of Nazareth and the impression which that life made upon His contemporaries. With this purpose in view it is worth while taking a modern translation of the New Testament (such as Moffatt's or Weymouth's) and reading the gospels straight through, just as one would read an ordinary modern book, in order thus to get a general impression of the main features of the way of living which Jesus sets before us. Some details may be difficult to understand or to interpret, but the general outline will be clear enough. Think of the kind of things He did: the way He treated people, especially people whom other folk disregarded; think of the extraordinary fashion in which He really cared for them, not with a sort of professional charity or forced "love," but with real human kindness and friendliness, from the time when He cheered the neighbours as they dropped into the carpenter's shop to the day when, for their sakes, He refused to save Himself from the cross; and think of the temper and attitude of mind which lay behind this undiscouraged service of His fellow human beings. Think of the sort of things He said, which were simply a translation into words of what He was always doing: His description in the Sermon on the Mount, and in the parables, of the best kind of human life; His shrewd insight into every human weakness and His bold appeal to all the fine stuff latent in the man that God has made—his purity, his chivalry, his fundamental humility, his capacity

to do and dare anything to help a brother man or serve a worthy cause. Think of the way in which He swept away all unrealities in religion, and recall His absolute insistence on the vital importance of right conduct, and more still on the quality of spirit and motive from which right action springs.

Above all, think of the kind of picture of God He put before men, for in that conception of God the moral demand and the moral power of the Christian way of living have their roots. *God*, He always insists, *is Life and not a religious convention*. Reference was made, at the beginning of this chapter, to the curious instinct in men that makes them invent a sort of artificial stratum of life which they call religion, and then they banish God to it. Some of the Jewish contemporaries of Jesus Christ were very clever at religion-inventing, and reduced it to a fine art. If, for instance, you were a tailor and carried your needle on the Sabbath day, you broke an important religious law and displeased God. If, on the other hand, you repaired to the Temple, selected and paid for an appropriate animal and had it sacrificed, you would be doing something religiously meritorious. It came as quite a shock to them when Jesus Christ—and He somehow seemed to know—asserted strongly that God, the real God, had nothing whatever to do with that kind of thing: that, in fact, religion was something altogether different from what they supposed. He was never tired of trying to explain to them that God has far more to do with children and flowers and laughter and tears and all the myriad little kindly acts that weave the

texture of common human living, than with the mass of religious paraphernalia which men are so fond of concocting. God, says Jesus Christ, is really interested in and concerned with all the common stuff of our brief lives: our hopes and fears, our joys and sorrows, our work and our play, and all the wondrous tangle of our relationships with one another. "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing?—and not one of them shall fall to the ground without your Father: but the very hairs of your head are all numbered."¹ Now if God is like this, and if you begin to see that He is like this, then life takes on a different meaning altogether, and your reaction to life is profoundly affected. Truth is seen to be the echo of His Mind, goodness the working of His Spirit, and beauty the very texture of His garment; your work becomes your service to Him and to your fellows, and all your relationships with your fellow-men are brought within the magic circle of a great family.

Recall, finally, that this presentation of God, with its summons to such a way of living, though of necessity profoundly and directly personal, is no mere individualism; it is, on the contrary, the most social gospel that has ever been preached; when, says Jesus in effect, men will have the faith and courage to embark on this way of living, *together*, there you have "the Kingdom of God." What else did He mean by the Kingdom of God but a new order of society in which selfishness should be ousted by love as the ruling principle of all life? He goes on to say, in many different ways, that the

¹ St. Matthew x, 29.

goodness to which He summons men, and therefore the Kingdom which He plans, are feasible; they are ideals indeed, but ideals that are capable of realization. To this point we shall return later.

III

Such, in crude and broad outline, is the way of living to which Christ invites His disciples; a way of living which, if seriously pursued by even a fair number of persons, would be quite enough to turn our world into a very different kind of place. Yet, in this as in former generations of all the professing Christians alive in the world, there would seem to be relatively few who give a quite clear-cut impression of a life truly Christ-like. Why is this? Partly because it always has been, and no doubt always will be, "hard to be a Christian." It is far, far easier to follow the line of least resistance. And all honour to the gallant few who will climb any heights to go after Jesus. But to say this does not at all exhaust the answer to our question. I suggest that there is another reason for the relative weakness of practical Christianity, and that is that most Christians do not really know, or at least do not take enough pains to find out, *what it means to be a Christian in the twentieth century*. We know, or think we know, in a general sort of way, but not in a particular sort of way; our Christianity fails when we reach some of the more complicated details of life, in fact just in those very things where it ought to be and might be most effective. Most of us are far from irreligious, and some of us are still church-

goers; but few of us are competent performers in the sphere of "every-day religion."

I was talking about these things recently to a friend of mine, who is foreman in a wool factory. He is honestly trying, in that factory, to do his duty as a Christian; but he is often perplexed to know exactly what that duty is. "I really want to bring more of Christianity into my working life," he was saying to me; "tell me what I've got to do and I'll try and do it." To such a demand as that it is difficult to find a complete and wholly satisfactory answer. And for this reason, that the Church in our generation has not yet thought out in its fullness the kind of national life, social life, or business life that would be in harmony with the way of living which Christ enjoins and with the idea of God which He has brought to men.¹ The Church has not as a rule failed in enthusiasm for Christianity as a body of truth; but the exploration of Christianity as a way of living it has largely left to individual pioneering and private initiative. No one wants to see the Church lose its hold on fundamental Christian doctrine; indeed as the generations pass it becomes more and not less vital to do the work of Christianizing the common thought of God. But many of us long to see the Church set itself, as seriously, to grapple with the other task, and so avoid the failure which waits upon a one-sided emphasis and a wrong proportion.² Moreover, this

¹ I use the word Church in its widest sense as denoting organized Christianity generally.

² One of our greatest Christian thinkers, Prof. D. S. Cairns, says: "Instead of claiming the whole world extensively and inten-

lop-sided tendency in the Church not only prevents it doing what it might be doing for the world, but it leads it to miss the most vital meaning of its cherished creeds. It comes to think of them as shelters to hide in, whereas they are, in fact, weapons to fight with, and they lose their edge if they are never put to their proper use.

There is, nevertheless, good reason to hope that in this matter of "applied Christianity" our generation is going to witness some substantial progress. It is not only that, as was noticed above, there are a very large number of people who believe, if vaguely, that the world may be salvaged by trying Christianity. There are other people who hold that belief, who are resolutely determined also to "find out, by hard thinking and by bold personal experiment, *how* it is going to be salvaged, and what is really meant by applying the principles of Jesus Christ to the details of modern living. And they will refuse to be discouraged either by the apathy of the multitude on the one hand or, on the other, by those who attack the Christian ethic as being, to-day, inapplicable and unworkable. It is intelligible that a man should take a frankly pagan point of view and say he prefers the world as it is, with a moderately fair chance of a good time, and without any nasty religious altruism to spoil a man's hope of looking after himself. But it is hardly a rational proposition to assert that Christianity is all right for an individual but was never meant to apply to

sively for Christ, *the Church has left great spaces in its moral demands*, and into these empty houses there have entered the seven devils of national self-interest and the greed of personal gain."

social, national and international affairs. That is not a distinction that can be logically sustained; and, at any rate, it is not the Christianity of Jesus Christ. He, clearly, meant to be, and must inevitably be, Master everywhere if He is Master anywhere.

IV

Everyone's way of living is determined ultimately by his standard of values. What is life really for? What are the things that really matter? How can life and personality be most fully realized? These questions are answered by "the world" in one way, by Jesus Christ in quite another way. It is important to see how great a gulf divides the two answers. You cannot really make a compromise between them, as the Church has sometimes tried to do, with disastrous results. You cannot serve God and mammon. The need of the world, and of the Church, to-day is for more Christians who, flinging caution and compromise to the winds, will take Christ's standard of values and proceed resolutely to work them out in all the conditions of modern living.

Chief among the possible lines of advance are those of corporate and personal thinking, followed by corporate and personal experiment. There are already some groups of Christians, and there ought to be many more, trying by joint thinking to find out what should be involved in Christian discipleship under modern conditions. With regard to corporate experiment, think what it might mean if sufficiently

strong and representative groups in specific industries or certain professions were to make fresh and bold experiments in applying Christianity to their several callings. Meantime, pending any considerable Christianization of the conditions of present-day living, it can hardly be denied that, within the framework of Society as it is, there is enormous scope for personal adventure in Christian living. Everyone of us who "means business" in this matter can probably think straight away of certain domains of personal living and relationships (some of which will be discussed in the chapters that follow) which have never been thoroughly and finally claimed for Christianity. As to the importance of theory and practice going hand in hand, I may be permitted to quote a story from the mission field, which will emphasize the point better than any lengthy argument. The story goes that a Korean came into the study of a missionary one day and said, "I have been memorizing some verses in the Bible, and thought I would come and recite them to you." The missionary listened while this convert repeated in Korean, without a verbal error, the entire Sermon on the Mount. Feeling that some practical advice might be helpful, the missionary said, "You have a marvellous memory to be able to repeat this long passage without a mistake. However, if you simply memorize it, it will do you no good. You must practise it." The Korean Christian smiled as he replied, "That's the way I learned it." Somewhat surprised, the missionary asked him what he meant, and he said, "I am only a stupid farmer, and when I tried to memorize it the verses

wouldn't stick. So I hit upon this plan. I memorized one verse and then went out and practised that verse on my neighbours until I had it; then I took the next verse and repeated the process, and the experience has been such a blessed one that I am determined to learn the entire Gospel of Matthew that way." And he did it.

That, after all, is the only way. The only way to learn to pray is, not to read books about prayer, but to pray. The only way to become Christlike is, not to devour books on Christian ethics, but to plunge recklessly into Christ's way of living. And if a man has the pluck to do that, he will assuredly find that the motive and the knowledge and the dynamic for such a life are increasingly available. The power to be like Christ is, by a law that never fails, invariably given to those who are willing to walk with Him in a joyful, personal companionship. This is revolutionary Christianity—for to walk with Him and live by love does mean the turning upside down of all ordinary human conventions and human standards. This is creative Christianity—for it solves the insoluble problem of transforming human nature: you will never get a changed world unless you can provide changed men. This is the Christianity after which men to-day are groping, and which has in it that which can save the world.

CHAPTER II

THE PROBLEM OF LIVING TOGETHER

1. *In the World*

"And it shall come to pass . . . that many nations shall come and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths . . . and He shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."—*Micah* iv, 1-3.

"Christ is our peace, He who has made us a unity and destroyed the barrier which kept us apart."—*Ephesians* ii, 14 (Moffatt's version).

"The future will show whether civilisation, as we know it, can be mended or must be ended. The time seems ripe for a new birth of religious and spiritual life which may remould society, as no less potent force would have the strength to do."—DEAN INGE.

"The history of the human race is the diary of a bear-garden."—*The Gentleman with a Duster*.

"We are at the beginning of an age in which it will be insisted that the same standards of conduct and responsibility for wrong done shall be observed among the nations and their governments that are observed among individual citizens of civilized states."

PRESIDENT WILSON, 1917.

"Standing as I do in view of God and of eternity, I realize that patriotism is not enough; there must be no bitterness, no hatred in my heart towards anyone."—EDITH CAVELL, just before her execution.

"He drew a circle that shut me out,
Heretic, rebel, a thing to flout;
But love and I had the wit to win,—
We drew a circle that took him in."

CHAPTER II

THE PROBLEM OF LIVING TOGETHER

1. *In the World*

THE title of this chapter is a not altogether inept epitome of the whole long human story since the earliest man emerged. From the first fumbblings of palæolithic man after something more communal than simply slaying your prey for yourself, up to the latest mandate given to the League of Nations the problem all along, while it grows larger and more complex, remains essentially the same. But the human race is taking an unconscionably long time to solve it!

Let it be said at once that anyone who cares in the least about "every-day religion," indeed anyone who takes life seriously at all, finds himself confronted by this world-old problem every day and every hour of his existence. That is perhaps sufficient reason for giving it a foremost place in this series of studies. It is with the larger, and what may seem the more remote, aspects of the problem that the present chapter is chiefly concerned. If it should be felt that inter-national and inter-racial questions are after all somewhat distant from the business of daily life, I would urge in reply that a man's relationships with his next-door neighbours are inextricably bound up with his notions of what

the world ought to be, and further, that, if he is proposing to live by the Christian standard, he must, in thought and ideal and imagination, apply that standard on a world scale while he endeavours to practise it on the scale of his own personal life. The two things act and re-act upon one another in vital and inevitable fashion.

I

It is one thing to bring a great war to an end; but, as the world now knows after more than a decade of bitter experience, it is quite another thing to "make peace." In Europe, the forces, political and economic, which make for disintegration seem as powerful and active as ever; Fascist, Nazi, Communist, Bolshevik—each will dominate, but not co-operate, and the solution of the 'problem of living together' seems deplorably far off. Throughout the East, far and near, there are vast masses of human beings seething with vague hopes and unfulfilled desires; from India to Egypt there are populations awaking from the sleep of ages, while in China and Japan it is a race between the forces of Christianity and those of materialism and militarism to determine the type of the civilization that is to be. And the United States of America with her hands full enough with her own shattering economic troubles (1933), has little sympathy to spare for a chaotic world from which she is, geographically, so comfortably removed.

Such facts as these might appear to give some force to the pessimists' assertion that the idea of

world peace is a fantastic dream, grotesquely outside the region of any practical politics. Such a view, however, seems to many sane people singularly superficial, and one that fails to take account of some significant factors in the present situation. One such factor, for instance, and one the importance of which cannot be over-estimated, is the plasticity of the world as it is in this present period of history. How long this phase of plasticity will last no man can say; but there can be no doubt that at present most human institutions are more malleable than they have been for centuries, and may well remain in this condition for some time yet. Nothing is stationary; everything is moving; in General Smuts' arresting phrase, "mankind has struck its tents and the great caravan of humanity is once more on the march." All seem agreed that the way out is in front and not behind. We are at the close of an epoch; "the vast procession of men is slowly turning its face the other way." There is noticeable a widespread mental restlessness, which has its good as well as its bad sides; men's minds are open and receptive, and afford a fruitful soil in which new ideas may germinate.

It may well be that our generation will be judged by history for the use it makes of this plastic period, and for the kind of mould into which it runs its molten metal.

Another favourable omen which may be noted is the indubitable fact that a very large number of men and women, of many different nations, and especially the younger men and women, are beginning to see the sheer iniquity of militarism, with its

creed that "war is an essential element in God's scheme of the world" (Moltke). They are also beginning to note the fatuous folly and the inane futility of settling differences by appeal to force. If you have a quarrel with your neighbour, and if, even though you may be in the right and he in the wrong, you cannot agree with him, then to try and club him over the head settles nothing; indeed, it makes any real agreement, any satisfactory *modus vivendi*, far more difficult of attainment. I am not saying that, at our present stage of human development, all force is always wrong; until we have learnt how to use love it will be necessary that unsocial members of society (e.g. criminals) should be restrained and coerced, under due legal safeguards. But as a means of adjusting what may be called normal differences, and especially international differences, force is stupid and hopeless. The intricate business of human living together demands always thought and method that are essentially constructive, whereas force is always destructive. It is not as if you could kill bad ideas, such as militarism, with force. All the shells and bombs in the world cannot destroy a wrong-headed conception. That kind of remedy, consistently and continuously applied, would merely end in the break-up of civilization. As G. A. Studdert-Kennedy used to put it in his blunt and breezy fashion, "Force is futile when you come to deal with realities. You can't cure rabies by killing mad dogs, no matter how cheerfully you do it. Mad dogs when they get loose must be kicked or shot or destroyed somehow, and it requires grit and gumption to

kill them. But to cure rabies demands grit and gumption of another sort. That battle must be fought out in a laboratory by men armed with patience and scientific knowledge, and not in the public street by men armed with ammunition belts and rifles. Trying to kill sin by force is as futile as hunting influenza bugs with a blunderbuss.”¹

There is another movement of thought to-day, akin indeed to that distrust of force which has just been referred to, which may be reckoned an asset as we confront this tremendous problem of human living together. It is the steadily growing consciousness that progress can never be measured in terms of mechanism or materialism. To pile up money, to build empires, to cross the world by aeroplane, to wrest Nature's secrets from her and make them serve our comfort and convenience in a thousand different ways—all these things count for next to nothing if meanwhile there is little or no advance in the things of the spirit. We live at the close of a century of amazing mechanical triumph; we can achieve things, in the region of applied science, at which our grandfathers would have gasped; and the total result seems to be that the world's body has outgrown its soul. What is the good of all our science if we only harness it to hate and to the forces of destruction. What is the good of a whole world of enormously successful business and mechanism and organization and applied science if, instead of mastering these things, we are mastered by them? Many are asking these questions to-day in all seriousness; and many others,

¹ *Lies!* p. 117.

apparently absorbed in pleasure or money-making, are dimly aware of such thoughts just below their consciousness. The truth is we are not yet big enough to master our altered world; "the world is new, and we have only one way to meet it: we must become new men."

II

Something of this instinct as to the futility of force and the ultimate supremacy of the spiritual, is finding outlet and expression in the League of Nations. The League, though it has had to fight for its existence, and despite its many enemies, has clearly come to stay. It has proved, these fifteen years some set-off to the disasters (some would say, the betrayals) of Versailles, and the ill-judged attempt—surely fore-doomed to failure—to devise for Germany a kind of economic slavery which was to last, according to the terms, till 1960 (think of the arrogance of one generation seeking thus to legislate for posterity!). And, if justice and peace and liberty are words that have any meaning, it was to save the world from this kind of bondage of fear and vengeance that those millions of brave men laid down their lives.¹ It need not be denied that the attainment of abiding peace is the hardest

¹ "For many of us necessarily the first thing in life is, and for ever must be, to be faithful to our unwritten compact with the young souls whose last breath was given for the common cause; for the highest conception of national purpose and human ideals that it was in them to believe. Even the economic salvation of the mass of men would be worked out more straightly and surely if the living, generally, could contrive to be a little truer to the dead."
—*The Observer*.

task humanity has ever set before itself: "Of all achievements deserving our pursuit, peace is the last that can be taken with a run." And the League has, of course, plenty of ill-wishers, and there are plenty more who dismiss it as a wild project of optimistic idealism that takes no account of hard facts. Utopian it is, if you like; but then, as Lord Grey once publicly insisted, the alternatives are Utopia or Hell. That is not cheap rhetoric, but a sober statement of plain issues. The League has come to be "an essential part of the machinery of civilization. If it succeeds, civilization is safe. If it fails, civilization is doomed." The world of our day is not unlike a household in which each member of the family should, for some mad reason, barricade his room door with his chest of drawers and peer fearfully into the passage through chinks in the door. We live in a world dominated by fear; and where fear is, war is not far off, and, as many of us have good cause to know, modern warfare can best be described as hell.

At last a considered and deliberate attempt is being made to substitute a basis of trust for a basis of fear in international relationships. The best hope of the League of Nations' success lies in its appeal to every man's deep instinct that the world was surely meant to be, not a cock-pit for senseless savage fights, but a setting for the common life of a rational human society. It is to this better self in man that the League frankly appeals in its insistence on the essential unity and interdependence of all men and all nations, in its substitution of right for might and reason for the sword in the

settlement of international disputes, and in its introduction of the system of mandates, establishing thereby the principle of stewardship as between the stronger and the weaker nations, the more advanced and the more backward races of the world. During the last thirteen years the League has become the centre around which international life has been built up. "If it were to disappear to-day," says its late Secretary-General Sir Eric Drummond in a recent speech,¹ "nearly every political treaty that has been concluded during these thirteen years would vanish with it, because the majority of them are linked up with the League. A state of chaos would arise in international relations. The first task for statesmen on the League's disappearance would be to re-invent the League."

To discuss in any detail the aims and the work of the League is beyond the scope of this chapter; it is to be hoped that any who may read and agree with what is said here either are already or will shortly become members of the League of Nations Union and familiarize themselves with its literature.² All that I am attempting to do in this chapter is to indicate something of what, as it seems to me,

¹ *The Times*, 6th April, 1933. And compare the verdict pronounced by Lord Balfour: "I am more than ever convinced that the experiment that we have begun is an experiment we never can afford to drop. The League of Nations may be and will be modified. The pact may be changed, but . . . that we can ever consent to go back to the international disorganization which preceded the League of Nations, that we can ever give up carrying out tasks which only the League can carry out, that civilization will submit to retrace one of the greatest steps ever taken, that, I frankly admit, seems to me absolutely incredible."

² For all information about the League of Nations Union apply to the central offices, 15 Grosvenor Crescent, S.W.1.

ought to be the point of view of the ordinary Christian in this crucial question of world politics, and to show that in these things the ordinary Christian is, as a Christian, directly and intimately concerned. What then, from the Christian standpoint (and indeed the standpoint of any man of goodwill), are likely to be the determining factors and conditions in establishing anything like a real fellowship of nations?

Four such conditions may be briefly referred to. In the first place, any real international partnership will have to be a partnership of democracies, of peoples, not simply of governments; not something imposed or arranged from above, but something that grows from below. Nothing else can be stable or lasting.¹ And such partnerships will have to take account of other factors than national interest or expediency. A modern political writer² has justly insisted that "treaties which are based simply on the self-interest of the contracting Powers, uninformed by any larger idea of international comity, will last only as long as those interests seem to coincide."

Secondly, any true and abiding peace will mean lifting up the whole idea of nationality on to an altogether higher level. The increasing dominance of the idea of nationality has been one of the most significant things of the age in which we live. But

¹ The failure of the Congress of Vienna (1814) was due, among other causes, to the fact that its members were autocrats or the nominees of autocrats, and to the fact of its standing for the *status quo*, unable to see or take account of the new ideals of national freedom which were beginning to seize men's minds.

² G. Lowes-Dickinson.

both the idea and its commonest expressions are still in the lower and cruder stages. As Lord Hugh Cecil has pointed out, one of the main causes of war is the proposition that men owe a boundless devotion to their own country and none whatever to any other country. He justly urges that "what is needed is to realize that nationalism is not a quasi-religion, as some people seem almost to imagine, but a human passion, like other passions beneficent only so long as it is strictly disciplined and controlled by the moral law, mischievous and debasing so soon as it passes beyond that control. Nationalism is like the passion of acquisition or the passion of possession or the passion of sex. Within the limits which moralists have long ago assigned to them, these passions are beneficent; they are, indeed, the mainspring of a very large part of human action. But we have long ago learned not to tolerate their excess beyond the limits of the moral law. We should not be impressed if a thief at the Old Bailey dilated on the wholesome joy of acquisition, or if a ravisher quoted the amatory poets in a sentimental vein; yet we listen to just such absurdities from offending nationalists. We are almost put to silence about their crimes when they talk of their love for their country. *Patriotism has become, in a different sense from Dr. Johnson's meaning, the last refuge of a scoundrel; or rather, it is his convenient cudgel to batter critics dumb.*"¹ Any real international partnership will demand from the citizens of all nations, not less patriotism, but a stronger and loftier patriotism; not the blind and selfish patriotism

¹ A letter to *The Times*, October 1921.

which desires only national aggrandizement and national gain, but that far purer love of country which would fain see it play its part in some real international partnership and make its own special contribution to the common good of the whole world. It is no good disguising the fact that any such change of thought and practice would amount to a revolution. For it must involve some surrender of national rights and national sovereignty; and it is wholly irreconcilable with the notions of militarism and imperialism. It has been said with perfect truth that the idea of supremacy goes out of history if the League of Nations idea comes in.

Once again, there can never be any successful League of Nations until we all learn to conceive of Peace, not as a mere cessation of fighting, but as itself something positive, interesting, desirable, constructive; a Cause more worth while, more alluring, more compelling than that for which any war has ever been fought. Enthusiasm for war will only be banished by enthusiasm for peace. William Morris used to urge that "it is not enough to preach peace by talking of the horrors of war; for men are so made that they prefer horrors to dullness. You must persuade them that peace means a fuller and more glorious life if you would make them desire it passionately."¹ The same thought has been expressed vividly by H. G. Wells in his *Joan and Peter*: I make no apology for quoting the whole passage, so forcefully does it sum up and illustrate the present argument. "War," says Peter (an

¹ William Morris; *His Work and Influence*, by A. Clutton Brock, p. 23 (Home University Library).

airman with war experience on the Western Front), "War is an activity. Peace is not. If you take war out of the world, you must have some other activity. . . . What struggle is going to take the place of war? What is mankind going to *do*? Do you remember how bored we all were in 1914? And the rotten way we were all going on then? A world State or a League of Nations with nothing to do but to keep the peace will bore men intolerably. . . . We don't want a Preventive League of Nations: it's got to be creative or nothing. . . . No peace, as we have known peace hitherto, offers such opportunities for good inventive work as war does. . . . There's no comparison between the excitement and the endless problems of making a real, live, efficient submarine, for example, and the occupation of designing a great big, safe, upholstered liner in which fat swindlers can cross the Atlantic without being seasick. War tempts imaginative, restless people, and a stagnant peace bores them. . . . People with intelligence and imagination won't *stand* a passive peace. Under no circumstances can you hope to induce the chap who contrived the clock fuse, and the chap who worked out my gasbag, or the chap with a new aeroplane gadget, and me—me too—to stop cerebrating and making our damnedest just in order to sit about safely in meadows joining up daisy chains."

It remains to point out, in the fourth place, that these conditions of any lasting and satisfying world peace do unquestionably involve a fundamental change in the general outlook of men and nations, a change that cannot be achieved without the

operation of some extraordinarily potent spiritual dynamic. If for the forces of inertia, bureaucracy, militarism, greed, selfishness and fear there are to be substituted the forces of faith, hope and love, of conscience, co-operation, chivalry and goodwill, some colossal spiritual miracle is needed. The public opinion of the world is not going to be changed by waving a wand, or by a widespread dislike of the unpleasant consequences of war. Nothing, says Bernard Shaw, can prevent war but conviction of sin. Nothing can provide the new motive and the new outlook but that which can profoundly touch and alter man's inmost heart, giving him both the idea and the power to walk in a new way of living. Some of us are very deeply convinced that such an ideal and such a power are not to be found save in Christianity; that they are only to be had by those who seek them from the God of Jesus Christ. It was precisely to build such a world fellowship, "the Kingdom of God" as He called it, that Jesus spent Himself on earth; and to men now, as to men then, He offers both a programme for human society and (the very point where other schemes usually fail) a mystic secret for every human personality which alone makes the programme possible.

III

"The unaccomplished mission of Christianity is to reconstruct society on the basis of brotherhood." There are, at last, some signs that the Church is beginning to be aware of the immensity of the challenge and opportunity that confront her. And

what specifically, it may be asked, ought the Church to do in response to the demand to "apply Christianity" to the problem of world peace? In the first place, surely, it is for the Church, through her leaders, her corporate utterances, and the public opinion of her members, to insist, in season and out of season, on the absolute relevance of Christianity to just this kind of problem. Here at least she ought to be free from, or else can justifiably ignore, the charge of meddling in politics. Statesmen rarely make speeches on the topic of war and peace or the League of Nations without an eloquent peroration to the effect that the problem is at bottom a moral one and will only be solved with the help of religion. Listen, for instance, to these weighty words of Lord Cecil: "If we rely on the provisions of the Covenant to preserve peace, we shall be living in a fool's paradise. In the application of the principles of Christianity to international relations lies the only solution of the problem. It is not the Covenant of the League of Nations which can save humanity and civilization, but the spirit which underlies the Covenant." As the late Archbishop of Canterbury (Dr. Randall Davidson) said, in a notable sermon preached before the Assembly of the League at Geneva, "the League is now a living body, we want to ensure it a living soul." It is for the Churches to respond to this challenge, not just by occasional manifestos, but by the careful and deliberate instruction of all their members and of any others whom they can reach. The duty of such instruction will stimulate her corporate thinking on these things, which thinking is, as we have already seen, badly in

arrears; "there is," said Dr. Cairns with justice, "no common mind or standard as to what constitutes a Christian civilization."

Secondly, as her chief contribution to the solving of this as of other questions that press upon our generation, it is for the Church all the time to be getting on with her own peculiar, and vitally urgent, task, viz. that of *providing Christians*. Let us be perfectly clear about it, we shall never get a changed world without changed men and women; we shall never see any considerable Christianizing of politics, national or international, until there are *more Christians* available to leaven the whole vast mass of human thinking and human relationships. And while the Church dare not neglect the task of thinking out the relation of the Kingdom of God to all the complex range of human living, she must all the time, with undiscouraged persistency, keep at her great essential work of winning men into the Kingdom. On this topic more will be said later.¹

Not less vital is it, thirdly, that the Church should continually demonstrate to the world what human fellowship may be. It can hardly be without shame that a son of the Church should make this claim on behalf of the Christian society. Who are we, in a Church that is broken, divided, marred at a hundred points by a spirit of suspicion, of faction, of aloofness, of intolerance; a Church that has not yet triumphed over class distinctions and colour distinctions, a Church that has often sided with the rich against the poor, a Church that has been in war quick to take sides and in peace slow to forgive—who are we

¹ Cf. Chapter XIII.

that we should preach fellowship to the world? And yet, despite all our failure in this thing, we do know, with a certainty nothing can shake, and within a limited range have actually experienced, that the only way in which barriers can be broken down and real fellowship achieved is when men come to realize themselves to be brothers in the family of God. We in the Christian Churches are perhaps at last beginning to apprehend that *God is love*, and that the one essential, unmistakable mark of any of His servants is to walk in love, to live by the binding law of fellowship. How slow official religion has been to see this thing and to proclaim it! Out of all the amazing things the war showed us, was there anything more amazing than the fact of thousands and thousands of men learning the joy of fellowship and the glory of service and *not recognising these things as Christian?* "Nothing," wrote one who did full time in the trenches, "nothing has ever made me realize how little the teaching of Christianity had sunk into men's minds until I saw men living in the Christian spirit and not recognizing it as such."

If anyone would see a living example of the way in which Christianity can be "applied" as an irresistible force to heal and help and reconcile, let him note what the Quakers did in Germany after the Armistice. The Quakers, far more faithfully than any other part of Christ's Church, have always insisted that the only remedy for our national and international ills is that men should love one another. True to their principles, immediately after the Armistice off they went to Germany, and "there they remained, doing works of charity to the afflicted

bodies, and exemplifying to the afflicted spirits of fallen, broken Germany what remedy there lies in pure religion and undefiled." My quotation is from a remarkable description of their work in the *Nineteenth Century and After* for April 1921 by Maurice Hewlett. Mr. Hewlett continues: "I have a testimony to this work of theirs before me now. I take the following from 'A Letter to the Quakers,' written by the poet Wilhelm Schaefer, and published in the *Frankfurter Zeitung* last July." Wilhelm Schaefer is not, he says, "one of the Germans for whom extravagant hopes were shattered by the outcome of the war." He was not then a Pan-German, nor is he now a Bolshevik. On the contrary, he realizes "that a drop of hate sticks more tenaciously than all the love in the world," and knows "only too well that a victorious proletariat could help just as little as a victorious Germany." On that showing he writes to the Quakers as follows: "You are Christians, as we call ourselves Christians—although notwithstanding our ostensible Christianity we came into this world-war. We all know that love was the fundamental idea of Christ's teaching, but you have been able to remain faithful to this teaching in practice. Before the stroke of fate came upon us, you were among us an almost unknown sect; now your presence among us is overshadowing all the Churches. Neither the Papal Bishops nor the Protestant Superintendents have been able to keep themselves pure from the war's hatred, nor can they now point to any fundamental principle for life, as you can."

IV

One last word may be added, on this inexhaustible theme of Christianity and world peace, from a plain and practical point of view. What, it may well be asked, can any one individual do to bend history towards such a goal? There are a good many things he can do, especially if he realizes that it is ultimately the individual who counts, and that public opinion is the sum total of a number of private opinions. He can help the Church, in a hundred different ways, to bear its witness and make its contribution along the lines indicated above. Possibly a Church Councillor may read these lines who is conscious that the Church he represents never bothers its head about the Christian obligation to promote world peace. In that case, why not secure some members for the League of Nations Union, and start a study-circle, or get the parson to preach and lecture on the subject?

Again, the man who wants to help this cause will be careful, as a Christian, to cultivate a world outlook. He will refuse to be wholly absorbed in the needs and cares and tasks of his immediate environment; realizing that he serves One who loves the whole world, he will keep an eye on the far horizons, and watch for the Kingdom's coming in the affairs and relations of nations and races. He will understand that the enterprise of Missions Overseas is no mere hobby of a few of the religiously inclined, but is vitally bound up with world peace and world progress, and deserves the ardent support of every public-minded person. These large ideas

and spacious hopes will affect his reading as well as his thinking, and do much to determine his choice of books and papers; he will want to learn how it goes with the Kingdom everywhere even more than he wants to know who won the Cup Tie Final, or the Test Match, or the Open Championship. And, in the same way, he will take pains to do a very difficult thing—to get his opinions and his judgments salted with true Christianity. There seem to be so many “Christians” whose opinions on all sorts of ordinary matters appear to have strayed miles away from the ideas and standards of Jesus Christ. Perhaps very often the last part of a man to be converted is the region of his political opinions and prejudices. Not that all “Christian” opinions would necessarily be the same: they will surely show a wide divergence within the limits of being Christian. But to be “Christian” in a true sense they must be caught *from Christ* and thought out in relation to His standards, and they must be developed and matured within and not without the circle of a man’s deepest praying.

Above all, if any would help to solve the problem of human living together on the widest scale, let him on the scale of his own life fling himself into the adventure of living by Christ’s law of fellowship, sparing no pains to bring all his ordinary relationships within the circle of the Love of God. What will this mean in actual practice? For answer we may well turn to the most matchless picture of a love-dominated life that has ever been given, that by St. Paul in his Corinthian letter. I quote it here in full, using (with his kind permission) a paraphrase made by my friend Canon F. R. Barry:

"If I have all the gifts of a revivalist and have not love, I am merely a braying trumpet, or the clapper of a bell. Though I am a preacher and know all God's secrets, and all the Theology there is, and though I believe in God so much that I can remove mountains, but have not love, I do not count. Though I spend all my income on Philanthropy, though I am ready even for the stake, but have not love, there is nothing in it. Love does not take offence, is always trying to do good turns to others. Love is not jealous, does not swagger, does not stand on its dignity. Always behaves like a gentleman, never plays for its own hand; does not get peevish; sees the best in others; always champions the under dog; is glad when other people find the truth; never loses courage; never loses faith; never loses hope; always sees it through to the end. Love never lets you down. If it is sermons, they will be out of date; if it is emotionalism, it will stop; if it is theology, it will be superseded. For our knowledge is fragmentary, and our preaching is fragmentary. When the perfect whole has come, the fragmentary will be out of date. When I was a child, I used to talk like a child, I used to think like a child, I used to reason like a child. When I became a man, I found childish things out of date, for now we see but a blurred reflection, but then face to face. Now my knowledge is partial, but then I shall know fully for myself, just as God already knows me. These are the three things which stand the test: faith, hope and love, but the biggest of these is love."

CHAPTER III

THE PROBLEM OF LIVING TOGETHER

2. *Within the Nation*

"Jesus said: My rule of life is this: you are to treat every one else as you would like people to treat you; this is the essence of God's revealed law of conduct."—*St. Matthew vii, 12* (paraphrase by J. A. Findlay).

"If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?"—*1 John iv, 20.*

"He looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God."—*Hebrews xi, 10.*

"To seek for the reproduction of Christ's mind in the mind of the community is the greatest aim that we can cherish."—PHILLIPS BROCKS.

"If we do not Christianize industry, industry will de-Christianize England."

"Is it a dream? Let us shape it to action,
Mighty with truth's irresistible strength,
Bold with the courage which fears no detraction,
Shall we not climb to the vision at length?

Ever the dream-light grows clearer and finer,
Ever the stars draw us up from the sod,
Up to the light of the glory diviner,
Nearer the infinite glory of God."

"If the Christian ideal vividly expressed and plainly translated into terms of action could be proclaimed, we believe that the new age now opening might be fashioned according to the pattern of Jesus Christ. We Christians can only fail if we are either not intelligent enough to understand our Gospel or not honest enough to apply it."—*Statement of Aims of the Conference on Christian Politics, Economics and Citizenship.*

CHAPTER III

THE PROBLEM OF LIVING TOGETHER

2. *Within the Nation*

I

I KNOW an alley in Shadwell, S.E., which you would think a fit habitation for rats, but not for the human beings who do in point of fact live there. Never have I seen houses so grimy and filthy and repulsive; they can hardly have had a wash or coat of paint since they were first put together by the original jerry-builders. The houses look out on to a high blank wall, as filthy as themselves, at a distance of exactly five feet. In them you will find people living, several families to a house, people who often have not got enough to eat, and who in any case know, and can know, next to nothing of the real meaning of life. It is just two miles to the nearest park or open space of any kind, and the poor frowsy-looking women seem to have become infected with the squalor and ugliness of their surroundings.

I stood in that alley one day, reflecting on the fact that it is not exceptional but typical, and that millions of other human beings, in England and elsewhere, live under similar conditions . . . and I felt almost ashamed of the pleasant setting of my

own life, with its congenial work and happy home and all the beauties of God's earth close at hand. And I went on to ask myself the question, What has Religion got to say to this repulsive scene? Surely this alley and these hovels mean that in the business of human living together something has gone hideously wrong? What is the cause and meaning of it, and has Religion got any remedy to propose?

Now Religion, and by Religion I mean Christianity, has usually said one of two things when confronted with this kind of human misery. It either says that the "saving of a man's soul" is so overwhelmingly important that nothing else about him, such as his house and his clothes, can be said to matter very much, and that in any case undeserved suffering in this world will be made up for in another, where all wrongs will be put right. Or it says (and this is the view which underlies every sentence in this book) that the external things of a man's life do matter very much indeed, and that Christianity is profoundly concerned with them, and is not at all prepared to postpone to another world the setting right of human wrongs. This view agrees with the first-named, that Jesus Christ died, and lives, to "save" mankind; but it holds, with passionate conviction, that you cannot detach a man's "soul" for the purposes of religion, nor can you isolate the life of the spirit; rather, the "Life" which is God's gift to men is something for the whole personality in all its elements and relationships, material as well as spiritual, and is intended by Him to be realized in very large measure in *this* world. Else why are we taught to pray "Thy kingdom come . . . on earth"?

Consider for a moment what is involved in this idea of *realized Life*, for in it we shall find a principle to guide us amid the complexities and ramifications of the inexhaustible topic of these two chapters. If there is any meaning and purpose in the world, and if Jesus Christ is right about the absolute value of human personality (see, for instance, St. Luke xii, 6, 7, 22-32, xv, and many similar passages), then the conclusion is irresistible that every single human being has the right to an opportunity of living the best and fullest life of which he is capable. That the capacity to "live" varies indefinitely, and that numbers may reject or misuse their opportunity to live does not invalidate every man's right to a freedom to shape his outer life to his inner ideal, to a reasonable scope for the development of personality, to "such a life," in Hooker's phrase, "as our nature doth desire: a life fit for the dignity of man." At present, such a life is the privilege of the few, and the many have to view it from afar, as an unattainable dream.¹ How can you live "a life fit for the dignity of man" "if you and all your family are herded together in one or two dirty rooms,"² if your work is some soulless monotonous drudgery,

¹ "Civilization, with all its enrichments, has hitherto been possible only for a tiny section of the human race. . . . Our object should be to extend as fast as is humanly possible the boundaries of civilization so that every man shall be in the ordinary sense of the word a gentleman, with all the liberties and opportunities of a gentleman."

² "In such a home," writes one who endured it for many years, "I discovered the depths of discomfort, ugliness, irritations of flesh and spirit, weariness and indignity, that are inseparable from the herding together of human beings in ugly, inconvenient surroundings" (*The Woman in the Little House*, by M. L. Eyles).

if your earnings barely suffice for food and clothes, if you are never free from the fear of going under in the struggle for existence, if you have neither the knowledge nor the means nor the leisure to enter any of the thousand gates that open on the wide domains of truth and beauty? That—that maimed, stunted, imprisoned life, is what “poverty” means. And such poverty is the lot of some hundreds of thousands of our fellow-citizens in this wealthy land; poverty which inevitably entails physical and mental deterioration, and almost inevitably moral deterioration as well.

Yet it is impossible to describe this matter of full human living in terms of *rights*. If one should use such a phrase as “the right to Life,” it must in the same breath be added that your right to “live” carries with it a bounden duty to recognize and facilitate your neighbour’s right to “live”; for the very good reason that true life is incompatible with any form of selfishness. He whose supreme gift is abundant life has been at pains to make men understand that “whosoever will save his life shall lose it, but whosoever shall lose his life for My sake and the gospel’s, the same shall save it,”¹ and to insist that you should “love your neighbour *as yourself*” (which means that his attainment of Life should matter to you as much as your own).

One other preliminary, but fundamental, consideration may be emphasized here. It is that this human heritage of an adequate Life, or rather the opportunity to appropriate this heritage, can never be enjoyed by the majority of men so long as it is

¹ St. Mark viii, 35.

left to individuals to seize it as best they can. Such an arrangement, or lack of arrangement, is a survival of paganism, and merely means that the weaker ones are pushed to the wall and get nothing. Life which is not, as we have seen, a purely personal possession, can only become available for individuals by joint action; it can only be enjoyed by the various members of a community through the united efforts of the community as a whole. What is called the "Social Problem" largely consists in the facts that, hitherto, all who could have seized for themselves this "right to Life," disregarding the claims of the rest, and that the community as a whole has never taken any effective steps to secure the exercise of the right to its weaker members. At best the community has been too neutral; at worst it has taken sides with the "haves" as against the "have-nots."

II

Let us examine a little more closely this widespread lack of the means of Life.

It can be safely asserted that this terribly common lack of the opportunity to live is not a chance thing, nor inevitable; it is the result of certain causes, and those causes, in the case of our own land, are chiefly to be found in the kind of society and industry which have developed during the past two centuries and which in the main prevail to-day. And what is this kind of civilization that has thus grown up? The answer is, according to some clear thinkers, that we have allowed ourselves to become

an almost purely "acquisitive society";¹ that is, the common criterion of "success" is that of getting and having and holding, while, until recently, all that society as a whole has done has been to hold the ropes and keep the ring while every man struggled for himself. After making due allowance for the selfish and predatory instincts in man, it may still be a matter of wonder how it is that "Christian England" has developed this kind of "acquisitive society." The chief explanation is to be looked for in the history of the last two hundred years. The story of the industrial revolution is sad reading. An age of scientific and mechanical discovery made some great industrial development inevitable; but it was surely not inevitable, if more men had been true to the ideals they had, that such development should be the occasion for the growth of a large-scale selfishness, for a materialism that exalts property above personality, and for a ruthless and systematic exploitation of the labour of the men, women, and children of the working classes. There is no space here to dwell upon details of this history (which should be studied in such books as J. L. Hammond's *The Town Labourer, 1760-1832*); but the main facts of the last 150 years should never be allowed to fade out of sight, for they are the chief explanation of a great deal of the industrial unrest of our day. Trade disputes and strikes are not very surprising when you observe that those who labour with their hands are at last beginning to be aware

¹ See Mr. R. H. Tawney's able and valuable book, *The Acquisitive Society* (Bell). I am indebted to Mr. Tawney for some of the thought in this chapter.

of the full human life which, so far, has been beyond the reach of most of them, and when you note that, in the past, there has been no other way for them to obtain a fuller share in that Life save to band themselves together and seize it.¹

That this should be so, is characteristic of a social system which is based on acquisitiveness. A large part of modern industry is organized, not chiefly to supply what people want, but to make as much profit as possible out of the producing process and to distribute the profit, not among the producers, but to those who have bought the privilege of receiving it. As an inevitable result of such a system, gain counts more than service, mechanism more than men; humanity is ignored, the real meaning of Life is missed, and industry becomes an end in itself, instead of a means to an end.² Such a system directly engenders self-interest and self-seeking, and provides a highly favourable soil for the twin evils of abject poverty and swollen prosperity. And it is not surprising that, where the system as a whole knows so little of moral purpose or moral method, its details should often be irreconcilable with the dictates of truth and honour. Many a man has

¹ "Since the industrial revolution it has been axiomatic in the business world that man was made for industry, and not industry for man—a proposition usually summed up in the trite phrase, 'business is business.'"—Bishop of Peterborough (Dr. Theodore Woods), *Interpreters of God*, p. 81.

² These words were written in 1922. The events of the eleven years since, and especially the world's economic 'crash' of 1931-2-3, are proof enough of their truth. It is precisely acquisitiveness—"money" becoming master instead of servant—that is the main cause of our fatal continuation of over-production and under-consumption.

had to choose between conforming to a lower moral standard and losing his job, and with it his livelihood.¹ It is, of course, undeniable that within the system there are large numbers of individual people and of individual firms who escape the general infection and bring to their work higher motives and honourable methods. But, however numerous such exceptions, they do not alter the fact that industry as a whole is more concerned to make large profits than to care for the well-being of its workers and to render service to the community. And I find it hard to conceive how anyone who wants to see the law of Christ prevail and believes that God has in store for humanity some far better world order than we have yet seen, and then notes the type of civilization we now enjoy, can be other than a revolutionary. He must, that is, ardently long, not for a revolution in the sense of a violent catastrophe with riot and bloodshed, but for one that shall mean a complete and drastic change of mind in men generally, a change of mind that will express itself in a new and more satisfying form of civilization.

¹ Here are two authenticated instances: A man employed in a wholesale hosiery trade found that he was expected to pack a defective pair of stockings in every bundle of six to be sent to the retailer. Although he was a married man with a family, he had the courage to throw up the work rather than proceed with the dishonesty. A girl employed by a well-known drapery firm was expected to sew labels bearing the word "Reduced" on sale goods when she knew quite well that no reduction had taken place.

III

Idealists are trying people because they are frequently so vague. Those of us who believe that our present industrial and social arrangements are a remarkably poor attempt to solve the old problem of human living together are often asked what exactly we should propose to put in the place of the present system. That question I will try to answer, and indicate what an industrial order would be like which had more of Christianity in it. But, though I write as a Christian, it is only fair to point out that there is to-day a significant and a growing consensus of opinion, reached from very different points of view, as to the kind of common Life that is desirable; and indeed here and there it is already beginning to take shape. Any social and industrial system which is going to satisfy the new ideals and new conscience about these matters will have to be marked by three characteristics, each of them of fundamental importance. They may be summed up in three words—service, co-operation, and humanity.

Take, first, the idea of *service*. Why should not industry be animated by the same kind of aim and outlook that characterize what are called "the professions"? Doctors and parsons and teachers do not, as a rule, make money their first consideration; they are glad enough to get a living wage and to enjoy sufficient financial security, but the main object of work with most of them is not money but what they can do for their fellow human beings. Why should not a similar motive govern

the industrial process? In point of fact it *is* service to the community to build its houses, provide its food, make its clothes, clean its drains and arrange its transport; why then should not industry be recognized as such and organized with that end in view? Profit there would still be; but the community (acting possibly through the medium of Trades Councils or Guilds) would find the way to effect some rational limitation of the profit made, and to secure a fairer distribution of it as between those who have lent capital and those who perform the actual labour. Until industry is re-organized in some such way as this, it is almost impossible for the individual worker, toiling perhaps at some monotonous and exacting task, to feel the inspiration and uplifting of his daily drudgery that comes from seeing it as essential service and having it recognized and rewarded as such by the rest of the community. It is, of course, true that such a far-reaching change can only be brought about by a new spirit operating everywhere, in the director's room, the manager's office, the factory, the shop, the farm and the field; but why should we not look for the growth of such a spirit? Why should not the Army and Navy tradition of *noblesse oblige* come to inspire all common life and labour? The poor scepticism that says men will only respond to the stimulus of selfish gain, or must always work out their destiny on the animal level of a struggle for existence, is simply blind to the higher and truer facts of human nature; the war surely has taught us that if it has taught us nothing else. Let men be given but the chance to live their life and do their work on the loftier levels

of service, and their response, it may justly be claimed, would be surprising and magnificent.

But if industry is to function as "service", it must, secondly, know a far higher degree of *co-operation*. A great deal of the hard drive and merciless pressure of modern industry, pressure that bears hardest on the lower strata of workers, is directly due to the relentless competition which is almost universal (and which, in its turn, is an inevitable element in the race for profits referred to above). Indeed a large move away from unrestricted competition and towards intelligent co-operation is already discernible; men are beginning to see the futility and waste of power in, say, half a dozen milk-carts from as many different firms rattling down the same street of a morning, and to realize that some forms of partnership, as between different firms in the same trade and between employer and employed, will in the end produce more, make more things to go round, and thus conduce to the general benefit.¹ Here again it is true that such a change of external organization will only come in response to the imperative demand of a changed human spirit; as someone has said, you cannot pool industries like the coal-mines, unless you can "pool" human hearts and human motives. The many unmistakable signs of such a demand are a sufficient answer to those who say that all these things are governed by the immutable law of pure economics, and that to try and change them is as futile as charging a brick wall. As G. A. Studdert-Kennedy used to point out, there is no such thing

¹ Cf. *Competition: a Study in Human Motive* (Macmillan).

as a "purely economic" question, because economics are ultimately human, they are just what men make them. And there is no reason to suppose that it is really more "natural" to men to fight than to share and to combine. Who can look on the almost irrepressible brotherly instincts of man; and the way in which the modern mechanism of world-intercommunication almost forces men into neighbourliness, and deny that the instinct of fellowship and the skill to co-operate are the real law of human life and the supreme power in the world?

Thirdly, a way must be found for the *humanizing of industry*. No social and industrial system can be satisfying unless within it men can live their life and do their work as *men* and not as "hands"—God forgive us that such an expression ever found its way into our common language! A system which treats men as cogs in a machine, which chains human personalities, without any variation or relief, to soulless or repulsive tasks, which condemns them to the monotonous manufacture of "superfluous futilities," is clearly not to be tolerated by any enlightened common conscience. There is no "life" for a man worthy of the name unless in his home and in his work he is able to express his manhood, to exercise his creative capacity, to develop his personality, to have space and opportunity to grow character; and yet in thousands of shops and mines and factories to-day men's labour is bought and used while the personality behind the labour is totally ignored. As a worker said to a friend of mine, "When I pass through the factory gates of a

morning, I feel I leave my personality outside and become just a number." I have been told on good authority that the real cause of a coal strike in Wales some years ago lay in the following circumstance. A day labourer was killed while working in a mine. In accordance with their custom, the miners to show their sympathy stopped work and brought the body to the surface and did not return to the pit that day. When pay day came they found they were all docked a day's wages, including the dead man for the day on which he died! Could callousness further go?

In all these things there are, at last, signs of a great change coming. There is a growing consensus of opinion that the first charge on every industry should be the well-being of the workers, and that to his well-being the following conditions constitute the minimum of what is essential: (a) a living wage, (b) proper housing, (c) security from unemployment, (d) a recognized status in industry, and (e) proper conditions of work (involving adequate leisure). On the lowest grounds it is obvious that in the end the fulfilment of these conditions means better business and higher productiveness; while from humanitarian and even Christian motives many individuals and firms are already striving for reform. A welcome and notable factor in the coming of reform is the growing movement among business men, for the most part unprompted by the Churches, to permeate business with the principles of service and humanity; such as the Rotary Club, which originated in America, and which has now spread all over the world. The National Movement

towards a Christian Order of Industry and Commerce (which subsequently became merged in other movements of a similar character), put forth the following statement which deserves to be placed on record as an attempt to define what it means to apply Christian principles to industry.

The Movement's aim was "To rally men of goodwill engaged in the administration of industry, commerce and the professions, for the application of Christian principles to industrial, commercial and professional life"; and it put forward the following "Demands of Christian Principles in Industry":

- 1. The governing motive and regulative principle of all industry and commerce should be service of the community.*
- 2. The receipt of an income lays on the individual the duty of rendering service in accordance with his capacity. Every person should perform the best possible work.*
- 3. The receipt of an income from industry should carry with it a responsibility for the conditions and purpose of the industry.*
- 4. Any competition should be subordinated to the service of the community.*
- 5. Industry should create and develop human fellowship, and any practices calculated to destroy such fellowship are immoral.*
- 6. The value of all natural resources and of every privilege which owes its worth to the labour of all or to the necessities of all should be held and utilized for the benefit of all.*
- 7. Every individual man and woman is of intrinsic worth, and human labour cannot be regarded as a commodity. Therefore, every industry should be organized to provide:*

- (1) *As a first charge an income sufficient to maintain, in reasonable comfort, all engaged in it.*
- (2) *Provision for any special burden to which those engaged in the industry may be liable, such as undue fluctuations in work, sickness, etc., owing to the conditions of that industry—this in addition to any general provision which may be made by the State or otherwise.*
- (3) *Provision for superannuation—this in addition to any general provision which may be made by the State or otherwise.*
- (4) *Healthy conditions for all engaged in the industry.*
- (5) *Opportunities for development of personality, talents and self-expression.*

IV

Here then is a social programme which, at very many points, is entirely Christian. Brotherhood, fellowship, partnership, the "family" idea, the absolute value of every human personality, the conception of rich life, of common good, of far-reaching purpose—these are all fundamental things in Christianity. And, as has been already claimed, the hope of the situation lies in the fact that Christianity goes infinitely further than pointing an ideal, in that it releases a universally available *power* for its achievement. Once more the question may be asked, What response is the Church making to such a tremendous challenge and such an unequalled opportunity?

It may, I think, be claimed that the Church is just beginning to fulfil the first condition of render-

ing any effective help: the condition of recognizing with frankness and sorrow all that has been left undone, of confessing the sin of her corporate apathy towards the terrible social evils of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and of feeling a yet deeper shame for the miseries that still persist. There are also signs that she is beginning to accept the imperative duty of thinking out what is involved in the attempt to apply Christianity to society and industry. It is for the Church to endeavour to provide a Christian environment in addition to building up individual Christian lives; for can there ever be true Christian living in un-Christian conditions of life? And there must already be numbers of Christians who want to do the right thing by their neighbours, socially and industrially, if only the Church would tell them what to do.¹

Three other points may be emphasized in this summarized statement of the Christian solution of the "Social Problem." In the first place, to repeat what was said in the last chapter and what cannot be urged too often, the Church must never for an instant relax her efforts to perform what must always be her main work, namely, that of *providing more Christians*. It is Christians, men and women inspired by the love of Jesus Christ, who can create

¹ I should like to see the creation and development of some kind of permanent Christian Council of all the Churches, a sort of "General Staff" for the joint Christian armies, to think, and watch, and act for the Church. One whole department of such a staff would concern itself with the Christianizing of industry and commerce, just as another would be charged with the business of spreading Christianity overseas. The last-named indeed has already come into being, in the Standing Committee of the Conference of all the Missionary Societies.

a new public opinion without which no large reform is possible. It is the spiritual experience of Christians that supplies the highest form of social motive and social energy. It is personal Christianity that makes the best employers and the best workmen and the best neighbours. And the Christian society must perpetually keep before its members, with all its resources of instruction and of discipline, the very highest standard of Christian discipleship. In the face of the economics of materialism, it will have the courage to set forth the Christian ethic pure and undiluted. "It will appeal to mankind, not because its standards are identical with those of the world, but because they are profoundly different. It will win its converts, not because membership involves no change in their manner of life, but because it involves a change so complete as to be ineffaceable."¹

Secondly, it is for Christians to show men what *Life* really signifies. Much has been said in this chapter about "Life" and men's fundamental right to live it. It cannot be made too clear—and the Labour and Socialist gospels seem sometimes to blur the distinction—that to remove the material hindrances to true living is one thing, but to bestow on men the secret of Life is quite another thing. If you could at a stroke abolish slums and poverty and all the evils of our industrial system, that emancipation of human personalities would not of itself teach men what Life really is and how to live it—only Jesus Christ can do that. It is only He who can finally make men understand that a man's

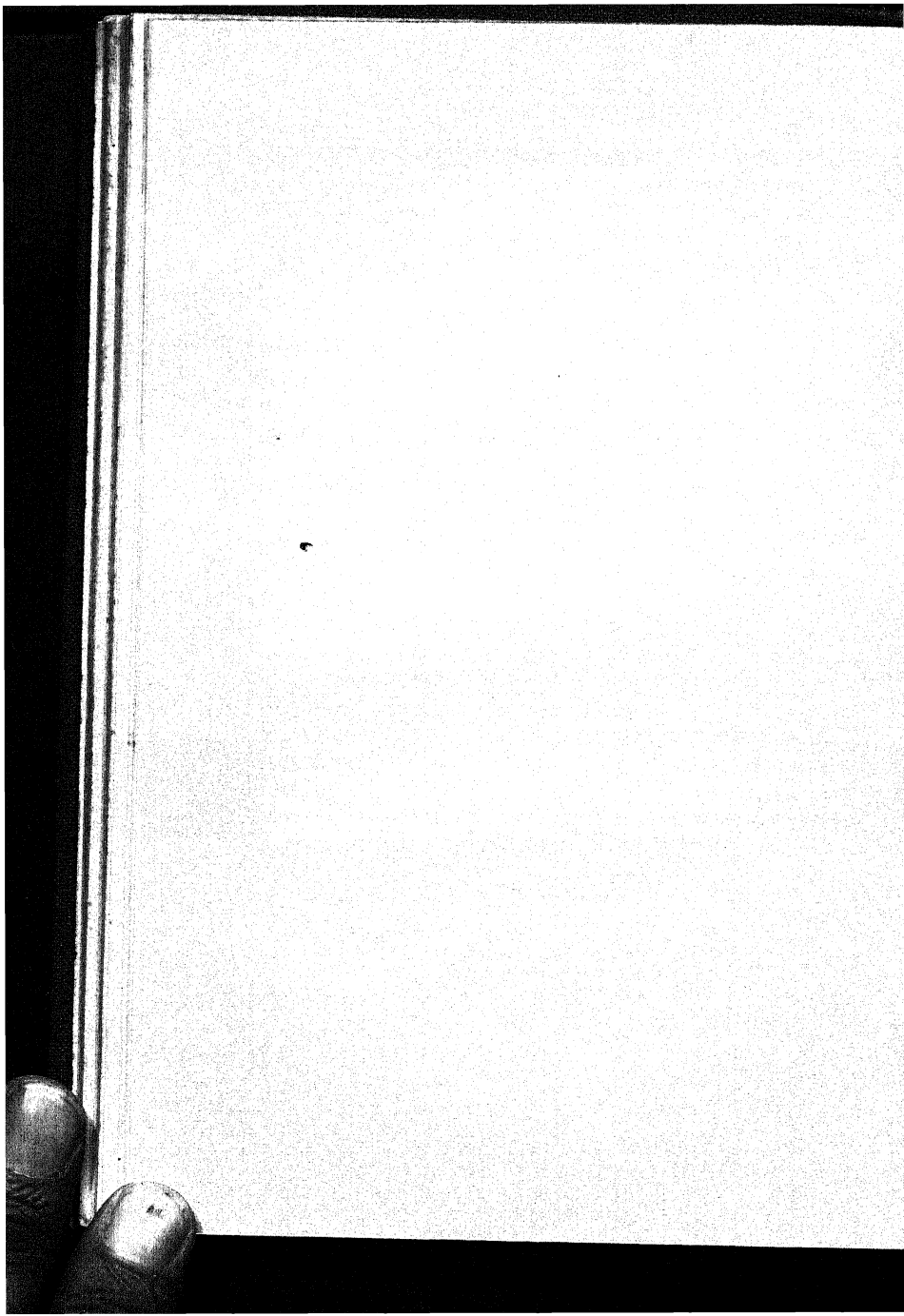
¹ R. H. Tawney, op. cit., p. 239.

life consisteth not in the abundance of things that he possesseth. And men to-day are groping after this knowledge. Indeed the unsated hunger for the secret of Life is one of the truly tragic phenomena of our day. The workers are beginning to win their freedom; but what is the good of being free to live if you don't know how to live, or if you confuse "Life" with money or property or meaningless activity, or with the antics and occupations of the heroes and heroines of the films? Here is the real end of true education, as of Christian evangelism: to show men how to enter into the infinitely wonderful heritage of truth, goodness and beauty which God gives to all who humbly seek Him.

Finally, it may be stated once more, and with uncompromising directness, that Christianity offers not only the promise of a new and better world, but also the creative, transforming power that shall bring it into being. The root difficulty of the intractability of human nature is met, and only met, by the extraordinary moral potency of vital Christianity. It is incontestable, as Dean Inge has pointed out, that "the real Gospel, if it were accepted, would pull up by the roots not only militarism, but its parallel in civil life, the desire to exploit other people for private gain." If, as Jesus Christ insists, the Love of God is the ultimate fact of the universe, and if, through Christ, men may really take hold of that Love and make it the governing factor in all human affairs—then, evil is not invincible, and the Kingdom of God is something practicable; indeed, its coming may be nearer than

we think. This chapter may fitly conclude with some noble words of faith and hope in Malcolm Spencer's suggestive book: "When," he says, "Jesus proclaimed that 'the Kingdom of God is at hand' He gave us the promise of a way of life far exceeding in goodness any conceivable Utopia bounded by the horizons of time and space. 'Fear not, little flock, it is the Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom.' . . . God in His sovereign Fatherhood has made men so capable of fellowship and so responsive to it that it is possible for human life to be lived on a basis of mutual co-operation. All work may be made to reflect the glory of the Divine craftsmanship. All business organization may become an expression of reason and goodwill. All measures for the distribution of wealth may be governed by the ambition to make life rich for everyone. All government may be administered with respect for personality, all laws made increasingly the embodiment of a common mind and will. The whole fabric of political organization may be inspired by the Holy Spirit of God. The same love, the same glory, the same peace and joy given to individual religious experience, may find their counterpart in the conduct of the organized life of the world."¹

¹ The Social Function of the Church.



CHAPTER IV
SHARING LIFE

"Ye ought . . . to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how He said, It is more blessed to give than to receive."—*Acts* xx, 35.

"Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thine hand to do it. Say not unto thy neighbour, Go, and come again; and to-morrow I will give; when thou hast it by thee."—*Proverbs* iii, 27, 28.

"For every guest thy heart receiveth, the Lord Himself doth open in thy heart another room. It is as if Christ handed to us Himself the key of each newly discovered chamber, saying, 'Let us together love to the best end the dear soul who enters here.' . . . As love grows we discover further and further the capacity of the house of our soul. There is no limit to the number or kind of 'these My Brethren' to whom we give the freedom of this city without walls."—ANON.

"A gentleman is a man who always tries to put in a little more than he takes out."—BERNARD SHAW.

CHAPTER IV

SHARING LIFE

AN attempt has been made, in the two previous chapters, to grasp something of the proportions and the perspective of the greatest of all human problems—that of living together, in the same street, the same town, the same world. In order to see it the better we have stood back from the picture, viewing it in a somewhat detached, impersonal fashion. But, for anyone who wants to do something with life, such an external view of human need must always be a preliminary to personal action. The critics in the clubs and advisers from arm-chairs familiar to all during the Great War illustrated an inveterate human complacency which likes to know, or seems to know, all about a problem or a battle without personally plunging into the fray. Such complacency is first cousin to the facility with which most men like to generalize, usually from very slender premises. It is, for instance, so easy, and so hopelessly fallacious, to think or talk about “men in the mass.” There are no such people. “No man,” an acute observer has remarked, “is a member of the mob to himself; everyone leaves himself out of his generalizations.”¹ That is common sense, the lack of which would go far to vitiate any

¹ A. Clutton Brock, *Studies in Christianity*, p. 165.

approach to this pressing problem of human living together. Nobody stands outside this complex business; we are all in it, with joint and several responsibility for the evils that beset us; "*we* are the Social Problem," is the inevitable conclusion of any group of serious-minded people who try to face this question in all its bearings. And we, writer and readers of these words, are, each of us personally, deeply implicated; each of us has his or her personal contribution to make to the building up of a human society which shall approximate more closely to the ideal of the Kingdom. How exactly are we going to make it? Something has already been said, in the first three chapters, about the work of personal Christianity in transforming the world of society and industry and politics. In this chapter an attempt is made to elucidate one particular aspect of the Christian contribution.

I

To the question, "What am I to do?" the Christian answer is quite plain. It may be stated in three words: "Share your life." It has been already urged that the attaining of life and the sharing of it are two integral parts of one and the same process. It is the great paradox of Christianity, again and again insisted on by Jesus Christ and verified by all true experience, that you only realize life in sharing it; "life" and "love" are almost interchangeable terms.

Now it must be conceded that to care more for giving than for getting involves, for most of us, a

very drastic change in one's point of view. But such a "conversion" of motive and mental attitude is precisely what takes place when anyone has the humility and the wisdom—I had almost said the common sense—to get his ideas from Jesus Christ. For no one can have any contact with Jesus Christ without making two discoveries, discoveries which rapidly affect the whole of his thinking and living. One is that the eternal God does really care about every single human being; they all matter to Him as individual personalities. And if we each of us, severally, are objects of God's concern, then clearly we stand in a very wonderful relationship to one another, as being all of us within the magic circle of the Love of God. The other discovery—perhaps it would be truer to call it experience—which follows hard upon the heels of the first, is that such a knowledge of God and such an attitude towards men must, and does, involve a shifting of life's centre of gravity. It means a permanent displacement of self from the throne of being. It entails, in the language of to-day, a drastic alteration in one's sense of values. It means, not a contracting or limiting or mutilating of life, but a radiant, passionate certainty that the fullness of life is only to be found in sharing and service and sacrifice. How indeed could it be otherwise with a religion which has the Cross at its very centre, which tells of a God "who spared not His own Son but gave Him up for us all"? "Shall the disciple be above his Master?" Are we to attempt to work out our vocation and destiny on easier and safer lines than those which were good enough for Jesus? A simple fisherman

once said to a friend of mine, "I never calls God *Lord*." "Why not?" asked my friend. "Because lords always have a lot of things and keep them and enjoy them; but God gives everything He's got."

This fundamental thing in Christian experience cannot be too emphatically set forth; for it is so easily obscured on the one side, by that type of ultra-individualistic thought, not yet defunct, which sees "salvation" as a kind of private security from the dangers of this world and the next; and, on the other side, by an exaggerated asceticism which views sacrifice as an end in itself. The essential thing in "salvation" is that the man is saved from a life of selfishness into a life of love. "Whatever spiritual experiences a man may have gone through, if he is not delivered from his self-regarding impulses, then he is not converted to the Christian position."¹ "I sometimes think," says another Christian of to-day, "that Christ barely recognizes any sin except selfishness; and it is just there we are so utterly different, for selfishness is about the one sin we don't recognize." It is not so much a question of a conscious, almost artificial, "mortifying" of selfish instincts; it is rather that, in the company of Christ, you come to care for something not yourself, more than you care for yourself, to forget yourself altogether in the absorbing interests of His plans and His cause. The question He always asks of those who follow Him is what they are doing to share their life, and His sternest condemnation falls on those who *fail to share it*; those who, confronted by opportunities to help, thoughtlessly and

¹ A. H. Gray, *The Christian Adventure*, p. 29.

uselessly, "pass by on the other side."¹ Mazzini is said to have remarked to a friend, on the subject of a religious reputation: "When I hear a man called 'good,' I ask 'Whom then has he saved?'"

II

The genuine article in Christian unselfishness is not to be confused with a feeble, flabby sentiment of goodwill which never gets itself effectively expressed in action, a "love" which is directed towards everybody in general but does nothing for anybody in particular. A story is told of an artist busy in his studio and thinking hard while he painted. The subject of the picture on his easel was a poor, thinly-clad woman, hugging a small child to her breast, and sorely battered by storm and tempest. Suddenly he flung down his brush, exclaiming to himself, "Why don't I go myself and help such folk, instead of just painting pictures of them?" He was as good as his word, and Alfred Tucker spent the rest of his life in the mission field, the last twenty-five years of it as Bishop of Uganda.

I am far from suggesting that the mission field provides the only, or even the best, channel for Christian service; but I would venture to try and indicate, as plainly as possible, how life may be shared without any change of home or calling. We saw in the last chapter that there is a certain broad yet true distinction between "life" and its setting,

¹ See St. Matthew xxv, 31-46; St. Luke x, 25-37, xvi, 19-31, xviii, 18-24; and see St. Matthew xxi, 30, for a vivid picture of well-intentioned uselessness.

between the essence of living and the conditions of living, between true spiritual vitality and the material environment which may choke it or cherish it. The Christian is called upon to share what he has of both. Take the external things first. Who has not read stories of Antarctic explorers making forced marches on very meagre rations, when the food, at meal-time, is carefully divided up, and it is a point of honour with each man not to have a crumb more than his fair share? Now in this world, in a nation or a community, there are a certain amount of material things available, the things that make life reasonably satisfactory—food, clothes, houses and so on, and the means to obtain a sufficiency of leisure and of rational, healthy enjoyment. So long as there are vast numbers of fellow human beings, especially of fellow-citizens, who have not got anything like their fair share of these things, may it not be that a Christian—a true follower of Jesus and a true lover of his fellow-men—should make it a point of honour to refuse to have more than his fair share? I do not doubt, indeed I know, that there are men and women who do possess a good deal more than their share, who are nevertheless sincere followers of Jesus Christ and endeavour to act as stewards of their wealth; it is not for one who is only a beginner in the school of Christ to judge them or to try and lay down the law for them. And, further, I appreciate the very real difficulty of determining what is a "fair share," and the still graver difficulty, for the wealthy, of anything in the nature of an individual transfer of money either to other individuals or to the community. Neverthe-

less, allowing for all such qualifications and despite every difficulty, it would seem to be the duty of an ordinary Christian (who "means business" by his Christianity) to content himself with such a standard of living as he can conscientiously reconcile with Christ's law of love. "We are polite enough," says one who has earned the right to speak straightly about these things,¹ "we are polite enough to surrender our seat in a 'bus to any weaker person, but rarely our seat in the saddle of wealth and privilege. Convention gives us each our place and advantage, and we have tried to argue that God meant us each to keep our seats in the world's omnibus, trusting that He would make other people's standing and pushing congenial to them. In that great tract of living we have abandoned the idea of loving our neighbour as ourself, covering ourselves forsooth with the theological defence of caring more for our brother's soul than for his body."

It may be that not all Christians are called to this adventure of "voluntary equality" in the standard of living; though it can hardly be doubted that our social system stands in sore need of some such practical demonstration of Christian brotherhood. In any case, within the framework of life as we find it, there are hundreds of different ways in which those who want to share things can find ways to do so, ways that range from the myriad little details of daily intercourse to participation in large and com-

¹ Malcolm Spencer, *The Social Function of the Church*, p. 72. See also his remarks on "The voluntary practice of equality," pp. 145 f.

plex efforts to make the means of life available for all. Every man who means to share and to serve will, each morning, take a fresh look at his ideal—"not to be ministered unto but to minister" . . . "last of all and servant of all" . . . "more blessed to give than to receive"; and he will look at his Master, too, to take in a new stock of hope and courage; and then he will plunge recklessly and cheerily into a day of "sharing." Grumpiness at breakfast is a gloomy privilege he will leave to the pagans. In all the give-and-take of family life he will do plenty of giving, and that, too, without any of the rather priggish, obtrusive unselfishness which makes other people uncomfortable. "Let us love one another and laugh" is a capital motto for family life; as a savour of selfless giving a jest is better than a text. As Robert Louis Stevenson said, "A happy man or woman is a better thing to find than a five-pound note." And then in all the traffic of common intercourse, in the street, in the 'bus, in the shop, in the office, in the work-room or on the playing-fields, it will be for such a man a never-ending delight, like a little secret game played with himself, to devise all sorts of ways in which to carry out his "sharing" scheme. Here is a true instance, from the world of commerce, of Christian sharing. A young man had been in a responsible position with a firm of large timber merchants. Presently he left and started in the business for himself, to a considerable extent in opposition to his old employer. In the very midst, however, of a very flourishing period, with many contracts in hand, a serious fire destroyed the young

man's stock of timber. He was faced by the most pressing anxiety, for it meant possible ruin. Just at that time he saw, one day, his old master coming towards his office. He said afterwards that he could have hated him, because he thought he was come to gloat over his misfortunes. But it was as a friend that he came. He said, "I know that you are bound to supply timber to your customers by a certain date; and this unfortunate fire will make it impossible for you to do this. But my yard is at your disposal. You may have what timber you need and pay me at your convenience." But the kind of things that can be done by those who mean to do them are legion, and quite beyond the compass of any telling. And the opportunities to give come to all who look for them, whether they have much or little of this world's goods. Indeed it is proverbial that those who have less are the more generous in sharing it, often with a truly beautiful delicacy of perception. I heard of an old lady who lived in a wee house in the country who was found planting her best roses in the back garden. When reasoned with she nodded her head towards an upper window in a small house, and said, "I'm going to put some geraniums here too. I know they'll be almost out of sight of our house, but there's a woman sits all day sewing at that window, so tired-looking, and maybe the flowers will brighten her up a bit."

Neither home-life nor working-life, with all the various relationships which each involves, will exhaust the opportunities for sharing life. All sorts of avenues of service open up before the man who is in earnest about "every-day religion." To insert

a lever under the mountainous mass of world misery and need, and raise it even a few inches, will demand all the concentrated, co-ordinated energy of faith and love that any given generation is able to supply. And in this organized effort it is for every Christian man and woman to find their place and do their part. The missionary enterprise, at home and overseas, the various branches of social service, the many forms of "Church work"—all these activities are integral parts of the one great endeavour to bring "life" to those who lack it, and in all of them there is an increasing demand for an unlimited number of willing helpers. Men and women are wanted who will do small things—yes and *dull* things!—with a large heart and for the sake of a great purpose. There are plenty of people, someone has said, who will cheerfully die for a cause, but if you ask them to teach a Sunday School class they will go away in a rage! In bringing this section of our subject to a close, three practical suggestions, obvious indeed but sometimes neglected, may be humbly proffered to any who are trying to share life, through organized effort or in other ways. First, keep all relationships very human, and free from the blight of officialism or professionalism. Secondly, develop the knack of seeing the good in other people, and building on it.¹ Thirdly, find the way to make real friends with some family or some person who lives and works in some other social stratum than that in which you

¹ In personal relationships "there is only one attitude compatible with self-respect; namely, to find out and hoard like grains of gold all that is fine and generous and lovable in others, and do our best to find something in ourselves worthy of being matched with it." (E. F. Benson, *The Osbornes*.)

have been born and bred. It is a plan which opens the eyes, and helps you to know what "fellowship" may really mean.

III

What has been said thus far about "sharing" is, however, only half the tale. For, in the last resort, of all that any man can give that which is most worth giving is *himself*. He is summoned to share not only the husk but the kernel of living, not only that which can be seen and handled and measured, but that inner life of the spirit, that fount of true being, which, however imponderable, invisible, indefinable, is none the less the most vital and precious thing he has. I can conceive of a man who has a strict conscience about his money and material possessions and who is a laborious supporter of philanthropic enterprises, and yet somehow the total amount of his real contribution to the common good remains small. I can imagine another, with next to nothing of material worth to give, and hindered, perhaps, by ill-health or other circumstance from much active "service," who nevertheless, through the sheer quality of his inner living and through a quickened ability to communicate that quality, does more to supply the needs of his fellow-men than the first.

If this is so, it raises a very vital question for everyone who seeks to be true to his stewardship. What about the quality of life behind one's giving? What about the inner personality which must of necessity express itself in all outward contact with

other people, and which is ultimately, according to its character, either the curse or the saving of human living together? For the musician who sings or plays in public it is not enough to spend hours in daily practice and so produce a faultless technique; his real success as an artist depends on the very soul of music within him. "Behind all his technique," says a shrewd musical critic, "it is his life which is speaking to the lives of those who listen to him, and the question is not whether he can sing or play this or that difficult thing, but whether he has passed enough music through his mind for a very simple thing to go straight home." What is true of art is true of life. Keep the thought, the soul, the deepest springs of life pure and fresh and vitalized, and then you have something to share which is worth sharing. "What a man thinks, and makes with thinking, is the real thing . . . action is merely delayed thinking. Mind moulds matter very slowly, but then nothing else moulds it at all."

It is easy, and common, for an Englishman with all a Northerner's cult of sheer energy, to commit the supreme folly of neglecting the cultivation of the inner life.¹ Such neglect is intelligible in those whose notions are half pagan, or whose lives, perhaps through no fault of their own, receive no impress from religion or education. But it is inexcusable, nay tragic, that those who are looked to as leaders in moral and spiritual things should allow their own true life to become choked and swamped by absorption in organization, and the quality of it to wilt and wither through sheer lack of spiritual air and

¹ On this subject see, further, Chapter XII.

nourishment. "You give me the impression," said a candid friend to a hard-working parson, "less of a 'collected Galilæan' than of an under-staffed American office." Apt characterization of the scamper and rush of many of our lives! "You have lived," says a character in a very beautiful book,¹ "you have lived here five years, but lived *too heavily*. Care has swamped imagination. I did the same, in the City for twenty years. It's all wrong. One has to learn to live carelessly as well as carefully. When I came here I felt astray at first, but now I see more clearly. The peace and beauty have soaked into me. . . ." And to quote Ruskin's true and noble declaration: "The more I think of it, I find this conclusion more impressed upon me—that the greatest thing a human soul ever does in this world is to see something, and tell what it saw in a plain way. Hundreds of people can talk for one who can think; but thousands can think for one who can see. To see clearly is poetry, prophecy, and religion—all in one." Only those can "see" who will make the time and opportunity to be alone, and who will spend that solitude in the company of Jesus. With Him is the Well of Life, and from no other source shall one find adequate replenishment for the very springs of all living.

"Give us this day our daily bread, we pray,
And give us likewise, Lord, our daily thought,
That our poor souls may strengthen as they ought,
And starve not on the husks of yesterday."

And, let it be clearly emphasized, the motive and purpose of such life renewal has nothing whatever to

¹ *A Prisoner in Fairyland*, by Algernon Blackwood.

do with a sort of exotic soul culture; the purpose is, simply, that what is thus won may be continually shared. And shared it can be, with startling results; for, as all recent psychology goes to show, such deep interpenetration of human personalities is one of the most remarkable, and most clearly established, facts of our human nature. You cannot limit your spiritual outgoings even if you would; what you *are*, in the uttermost recesses of your real being, is always reaching out and affecting, for good or ill, the inner and the outer lives of other personalities. It is not too much to say that "the real world forces are not things, but thoughts. Every movement, for good or for evil, starts as a thought in someone's mind; a thought which gets hold of him and shapes him, and, through him, gets hold of others and shapes them too."¹ And, to cite Algernon Blackwood once again: "The sources of our life lie hid with beauty, very, very far away, and our real big, continuous life is spiritual—out of the body, as I shall call it. The waking-day life uses what it can bring over from this enormous under-running sea of universal consciousness where we're all together, splendid, free, untamed, and where thinking is creation and we know each other face to face . . . all linked together by thought as stars are by their rays."²

"Now sinks to sleep the clamour of the day
And, million-footed, from the Milky Way,
Falls shyly on my heart the world's lost thought—
Shower of primrose dust the stars have taught

¹ E. A. Burroughs, *World Builders*, p. 31.

² *A Prisoner in Fairyland*, p. 313.

To haunt each sleeping mind,
Till it may find
A garden in some eager, passionate brain
That, rich in loving-kindness as in pain,
Shall harvest it, then scatter forth again
Its garnered loveliness from heaven caught.

Oh, every yearning thought that holds a tear,
Yet finds no mission,
And lies untold,
Waits, guarded in that labyrinth of gold,—
To reappear
Upon some perfect night,
Deathless—not old—
But sweet with time and distance,
And clothed as in a vision
Of starry brilliance,
For the world's delight.”¹

In the light of such facts as these Christian praying takes on a new significance. If anyone should ask, How can I effectively share the very best and highest experience that may be mine? I should unhesitatingly answer, Learn to pray—and in the school of Jesus Christ. What after all is prayer but the communication of Life-force from man to man *through God*? Prayer, in its essence, is not the preferring of this or that particular petition, it is the opening of the whole heart and mind to the incoming of the love and energy of God, it is a deliberate taking hold of the life of God not only for myself and my own profound needs, but also, through a kind of vicarious receptiveness, for the needs of other human personalities with whom I am consciously or subconsciously linked. No wonder Jesus Christ said the most startling things about prayer and its possibilities.² And when you

¹ A Prisoner in Fairyland.

² Cf., for example, St. Mark xi, 22-24; St. Luke xi, 1-13.

note what He said, and when you consider what might be accomplished by praying (in the sense in which Jesus meant it), you stand amazed at the common neglect of this most potent instrument. The possibilities of service, of "sharing," are soon exhausted unless they can run out along these boundless spiritual lines. Love can never be satisfied with giving *things*; it must give self, and life; yea, all that it has of joy and glory, of Christ Himself, these it must give, with open hands and overflowing heart. Such, at its height, is the ministry of sharing, a ministry which lies within the competence of every common Christian, a ministry which belongs to the very essence of "every-day religion." The deepest need of all men everywhere is, quite simply, their need of Jesus Christ: all that He stands for, all that He can bring to them. The greatest service that any man can render his fellows is to share with them all that he has of Jesus Christ.

"I said, 'Let me walk in the fields;'
He said, 'Nay, walk in the town;'
I said, 'There are no flowers there;'
He said, 'No flowers but a crown.'

I said, 'But the sky is black,
There is nothing but noise and din;'
But He wept as He sent me back—
'There is more,' He said, 'there is sin.'

I said, 'But the air is thick
And fogs are veiling the sun;'
He answered, 'Yet souls are sick,
And souls in the dark undone.'

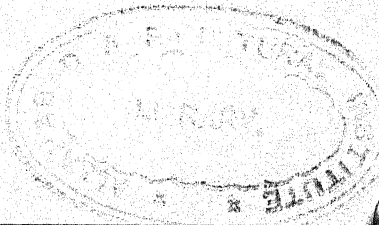
I said, 'I shall miss the light,
And friends will miss me, they say;'
He answered me, 'Choose to-night
If I am to miss you, or they.'

I pleaded for time to be given;
He said, 'Is it hard to decide?
It will not seem hard in heaven
To have followed the steps of your guide.'

I cast one look at the fields,
Then set my face to the town:
He said: 'My child, do you yield?
Will you leave the flowers for the crown?'

Then into His hand went mine,
And into my heart came He,
And I walk in a light divine
The path I had feared to see."

GEORGE MACDONALD.



CHAPTER V

CHRISTIANITY AND WORK

"My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work."—*St. John* iv, 34.

"Blessed is the man who has found his work, let him ask no other blessedness."—CARLYLE.

"Life without industry is sin, and industry without art brutality."—RUSKIN.

"And this is my way o' looking at it: there's the sperrit o' God in all things and all times—week-day as well as Sunday—and i' the great works and inventions, and i' the figuring and the mechanics. And God helps us with our head-pieces and our hands as well as with our souls: and if a man does bits o' jobs out o' working hours—builds a oven for 's wife to save her from going to the bake-house, or scrats at his bit o' garden and makes two potatoes grow instead o' one, he's doing more good, and he's just as near to God, as if he was running after some preacher and a-praying and a-groaning."—GEORGE ELIOT (*Adam Bede*).

"When I work for myself and live for myself, I exhaust myself, but when I work for others, wisely and well, I work for God also; and for my work I get that bread which cometh down from heaven."—COLLYER.

CHAPTER V

CHRISTIANITY AND WORK

THERE is a story, from Victorian times, about Lord Palmerston and his comment on a certain sermon which he happened to hear. The preacher (who, it may be, was somewhat ahead of his time) dealt straightly with some aspects of "every-day religion"; and Lord Palmerston, as he left the church, was heard muttering to himself, "Things have come to a pretty pass when religion is allowed to invade the sphere of private life."

The whole argument of the present book is that religion—the Christian religion—is intended to invade the sphere both of private and of public life, and that in proportion as it fails to do so, those who profess it have missed its true spirit and meaning. In the last three chapters some attempt has been made to examine the relevance of Christianity to some of the human relationships in which men find themselves, both as groups and as individuals. In the present chapter I propose to see what Christianity has to say to that which bulks largest in the lives of most men and women, namely, their *work*.

I

It was argued in the first chapter that the true sphere for a man's expression of his Christianity is

the petty round of common life, and not special activities of a "religious" character. The butcher, the baker, the candlestick-maker, the ploughboy and the publican, the merchant and the mechanic, need not go outside the shop, the farm or the factory to express and exhibit the Spirit of Christ. The mother with a home to make and children to bring up has as fine a sphere for God-like work as any human being could desire. Indeed, if anyone wants to be a true Christian his ordinary daily work is the place at which to begin the experiment. Christianity has always proclaimed the duty and dignity of work. Ever since man began to form any true picture of God, he has realized, with growing clearness, that God has made him for activity and not for idleness. "Six days shalt thou labour and do all that thou hast to do." As a right and normal thing, "man goeth forth to his work and to his labour until the evening." Jesus labouring as a carpenter in the shop at Nazareth makes work, for all time, indispensable to true manhood. He found, and showed, God in common work. Was it His own experience of years of plough-making for His fellow-villagers which elicited the saying, preserved on an Egyptian papyrus and more than possibly genuine, "Raise the stone and there thou shalt find me, cleave the wood and there am I"? Unremitting labour for the benefit of others He knew to be characteristic of the life of God and of all God-like men—"My Father worketh hitherto, and I work. . . ."¹

And the early Christians caught His idea of the dignity of work. The mystic secret of their new

¹ St. John v, 17.

life, with its initiation into new realms of love and joy and peace, did not exempt them from humdrum daily toil. Whatever spiritual ecstasy, as a Christian, a man might or might not experience, he certainly had, as a Christian, to earn his bread and butter, and to help others to earn theirs. St. Paul is very emphatic about this. Whatever his obligations and preoccupations as a preacher and a missionary, he insists on earning his own living by working at his own trade, that of a tent-maker; and he is very severe on people who seem to think that, as Christians, they are excused from unremitting effort to support themselves—"if a man will not work, he shall not eat."¹ It is curious to reflect how long the tradition survived (the Great War dealt it a heavy blow) that to work with your hands, or to work too hard at anything, is not quite consistent with the dignity of a "gentleman." Christianity, on the other hand (and it ought to know something about "gentle men"), makes it exceedingly plain that you cannot be a gentleman if you *don't* work, and work hard too. It is to the credit of the new generation that, in this matter, it has more sympathy with Christianity than with nineteenth-century snobbishness.

A duty to work necessarily implies the right to work; and these words are written at a time² when there are terribly large numbers of men and women, in our own land and elsewhere, who are more than willing to work but for whom no work can be found. This serious state of affairs is partly due to the complexity of modern society and industry, in which

¹ 2 Thessalonians iii, 10.

² January 1922.

practically all work is interdependent; partly to the terrible economic chaos into which the world has fallen, with the whole vast economic machine out of gear, and over-production met everywhere by under-consumption. I will not attempt here any discussion of the large and intricate question of unemployment.¹ Suffice it only to say, before passing on to other aspects of religion and work, that Christianity is as deeply concerned with "the right to work" as with such a question as that of "the living wage"; that it cannot accept with equanimity a world order where the economic structure is obviously reared on wrong foundations; and to note, with satisfaction, that every civilized community has by now come to recognize its obligation to assist its members to exercise their right to work, and its responsibility, in the last resort, to keep them alive when there is no work to be had.

II

I remember, in rowing days, watching an old boat-builder at work upon the frail shell of a racing eight. With infinite pains and with the unerring skill born of a lifetime's experience he handled his tools; and as he bent over his work, and the delicate cedar-wood craft took shape under his hands, the intent look on his face and the whole pose of his body seemed to suggest a profound, if unconscious, satisfaction in what he was doing. No doubt he

¹ The first draft of this paragraph was written in 1922, with little idea how stupendous the unemployment would have become by 1933.

was satisfied; for work, useful work, into which a man can throw not simply his skill but *himself*, is as necessary to human nature as food and air and love. It is a very deep-down instinct in man which bids him make things and put himself into their making. "Produce! Produce!" cries Carlyle in characteristic language. "Were it but the pitifullest, infinitesimal fraction of a product, produce it in God's name! 'Tis the utmost thou hast in thee; out with it then. Up! Up!" Creative work is part of life itself; that which is not expressed dies. And all the good work in the world is done in obedience to this instinct. Whether it is boats that you make, or tables, or houses, or clothes, or books, or motor-cars; whether it is thoughts, or words, or figures, or speeches, or lectures, or sermons; or whether your "work" is to assist, at some point, in the vast intricate process of supplying human need—whatever you make or do for men's bodies or men's minds, the success of the making, as well as the joy of it, will depend upon your putting into it the very best stuff that is in you. Your job, paid or unpaid, asks for the best you have.

Now work like this is sacred. God is concerned in it. When a man puts his highest self into his work he puts a bit of God into it. There is a real sense in which the Spirit of God "inspires" a good carpenter or architect or engineer, just as He may be said to "inspire" a teacher or writer or preacher. The Hebrews, very early in their history, got hold of this thought of God being "in" good workmanship. "And Moses said unto the children of Israel, See, the Lord hath called by name Bezaleel the son

of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah; and he hath filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship; and to devise curious works, to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, and in the cutting of stones, to set them, and in carving of wood, to make any manner of cunning work. And he hath put in his heart that he may teach, both he and Aholiab, the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan. Them hath he filled with wisdom of heart, to work all manner of work, of the engraver, and of the cunning workman, and of the embroiderer, in blue, and in purple, in scarlet, and in fine linen, and of the weaver, even of them that do any work, and of those that devise cunning work. Then wrought Bezaleel and Aholiab, and every wise hearted man, in whom the Lord put wisdom and understanding to know how to work all manner of work for the service of the sanctuary, according to all that the Lord had commanded."¹

In modern times, a singularly beautiful expression of this same idea is to be found in George Eliot's poem *Stradivarius*, "the gist of which is that God Himself might conceivably make better fiddles than Stradivari's, but by no means certainly; since, as a fact, God orders his best fiddles of Stradivari."² Says the great workman:

"God be praised,
Antonio Stradivari has an eye
That winces at false work and loves the true,
With hand and arm that play upon the tool

¹ Exodus xxxv, 30 ff.

² Sir A. Quiller-Couch, *The Art of Reading*, p. 15.

As willingly as any singing bird
 Sets him to sing his morning roundelay,
 Because he likes to sing and likes the song.'
 Then Naldo: "'Tis a pretty kind of fame
 At best, that comes of making violins;
 And saves no masses, either. Thou wilt go
 To purgatory none the less.'

But he:
 'Twere purgatory here to make them ill;
 And for my fame—when any master holds
 'Twixt chin and hand a violin of mine,
 He will be glad that Stradivari lived,
 Made violins, and made them of the best.
 The Masters only know whose work is good:
 They will choose mine, and while God gives them skill
 I give them instruments to play upon,
 God choosing me to help Him.'

'What! were God
 At fault for violins, thou absent?'

'Yes;
 He were at fault for Stradivari's work.'
 'Why, many hold Giuseppe's violins
 As good as thine.'

'May be: they are different.
 His quality declines: he spoils his hand
 With over-drinking. But were his the best,
 He could not work for two. My work is mine,
 And, heresy or not, if my hand slacked
 I should rob God—since He is fullest good—
 Leaving a blank instead of violins.
 I say, not God Himself can make man's best
 Without best men to help Him. . . .

'Tis God gives skill,
 But not without men's hands: He could not make
 Antonio Stradivari's violins
 Without Antonio. Get thee to thy easel! "

So do work and character intertwine. And
 Christianity, concerned so profoundly with what a
 man is and may become, is of necessity concerned
 with what he does, and what he makes, and how he
 works.

At this point a serious difficulty must be faced.

Granted that some form of creative work (that is, work that offers fair scope for skill and self-expression) is desirable for all, how many, in fact, have the opportunity to perform such work? What proportion of the men and women in modern civilized communities have work to do that makes any real demand upon the creative faculties that are in them? I write these words at the end of a working day. How many hundreds of thousands of "workers" in England have spent to-day standing by a machine, pulling a handle or working a treadle—not "making" anything, but watching a machine make some minute part of something—the point of a pin, the thread of a screw, the head of a nail. I think of the girls in the spinning-rooms of the Lancashire cotton mills, working ten hours a day at a monotonous and mechanical task. Are all these going home this evening with any sense of difficult work skilfully done, of exacting labour that has demanded, and received, their best? Or, if they think of the work at all as the hours of welcome release begin, would they not dismiss it with a shrug of boredom, or even a gesture of resentment—"same old shop, same old machine, same old foreman!" "Take from man," says J. M. Beck, at one time Solicitor-General of the United States, "take from man the opportunity of work and the sense of pride in achievement, and you have taken from him the very life of his existence. Robert Burns could sing as he drove his ploughshare through the fields of Ayr. To-day millions, who simply watch an automatic infallible machine, which requires neither strength nor skill, do not sing at their work, but many curse the fate which

has chained them like Ixion to a soulless machine."¹

No wonder Ruskin and William Morris, in the middle of the nineteenth century, turned in revolt against the modern industrial system and its slavery to machinery. It is a question whether they hated most the deadly soullessness of its methods or the devastating ugliness of its products. They rebelled against "the nature of the work which in our time most poor men have to do. Morris believed that their work was *joyless* as it had never been before; and that, not poverty, was to him the peculiar evil of our time against which, as a workman himself, he rebelled and wished the poor to rebel."²

This deep dissatisfaction with the joyless work of much modern industry, which Ruskin and Morris were the first to express, has since become far more acute and widespread. But it is easier to describe the disease than to indicate the remedy. For the mischief is deep-rooted; it lies, as Morris clearly saw, in the "values" of the civilization of our day. An industrial system which is more concerned with profit than with "use" is sure to produce ugliness, and to lose its own soul into the bargain. As Morris says, "a society which worships riches will express its idolatry even in its table-legs and chandeliers." The only remedy is a change of values; but a change of values requires a change of heart. And a change of heart, as many will agree, is a stubborn operation which demands a deep dynamic force such as only Christianity can produce.

It is not suggested that such a change of mind,

¹ *Fortnightly Review*, November 1921.

² Clutton Brock, *William Morris: His Work and Influence*, p. 20.

with resulting changes of method, would, or should, abolish modern dependence on machinery. We clearly cannot cancel the mechanical discoveries of the last century or two, and go back to a world in which everything is made by hand. But we can, and must, make machinery our servant and cease to let it be our master. We are only beginning to learn how to use it. It is, after all, only 150 years since Watts patented the steam-engine, whereas man has been on this earth some half-million years and presumably has much of his schooling still in front of him. It is safe to prophesy that, unless civilization is foolish enough to allow its best thought to be continually sterilized by war and preparation for war, "even fifty years will witness an enormous advance in the subordination of machinery to humanity. "Machines," writes one who dreams dreams, "far more efficient and requiring far less attention than any we yet possess, will do all the heavy work of carrying, driving, lifting, hammering, and so on; machines will produce the scientific appliances, etc., that are beyond the power of our clumsy fingers; and machines will prepare multitudes of goods that might be called the raw material of civilized life—rough, unfinished things—articles in what are the early stages of manufacture; upon these men will work, and make as much of their houses and gardens and clothes and meals as they desire, putting art and individuality into everything about them."¹

And as we become more enlightened we shall, no doubt, devise further means for the humanizing of

¹ *Life's Adventure*, Adult School Lesson Handbook for 1920, p. 130.

industry,¹ for bringing into all work larger and more satisfying scope for personality. For instance, in the ideal community, we should surely find ways to render harmless trades which are at present dangerous to those who work in them.² Also, where tasks necessary to the community are particularly exhausting or repellent, they should be compensated by increased leisure or lightened by some method of variation. Why should not I, a parson, every now and again leave my desk and my pulpit, and take my turn at cleaning out the sewers or going round with the refuse cart?

III

It may be some time before public opinion demands, and secures, any large readjustment of work and function in our complex industrial system. Meanwhile, at any rate for the majority of those into whose hands this book is likely to fall, there is little to prevent that Christianizing of motive and outlook which can charge all work with a new meaning, a new zest, a new delight. The man who is learning to look at life from the side of Jesus Christ, and to shape his practice accordingly, will find in his daily work the first and nearest field for his Christian experimenting. Whether or not he is moved by the æsthetic ideals of a Morris or a Ruskin, he will simply, for Christ's sake, come to hate all work that is slack and slovenly and mechanical; for Christ's sake he will put into his common every-day toil

¹ Cf. above, p. 64 f.

² Consumption is rife among potters and textile workers.

the very best creative capacity that is in him (and he will be surprised to find how much that is). It is striking to notice the kind of "extra" things that happen when a human life feels the touch of Jesus Christ. He does so much more than turn the atheist into a church-goer. He makes the cad a gentleman, the slacker a good workman, the philistine a lover of the beautiful. I recall hearing a story of a man who went to visit a clergyman and said he wanted to be instructed in Christianity. The clergyman was rather surprised (such inquirers do not, unfortunately, form the majority of most parsons' daily callers), and asked what brought his questioner on such an errand. Had he been to a religious meeting, or listened to some sermon that impressed him? No, he said, it was nothing of that kind. "The truth is, sir," he said, "it's to do with the foreman of the place where I work. What strikes me is the way he treats us chaps, and the way he does his work, and I've just heard that he is a Christian. If he's a Christian, then I'd like to be one too."

Further, the man who tries to bring Christianity into his work will do it as his service to the community. He will make bricks, or drive a 'bus or mend boots, or sell socks, not in the first instance for the money he can get thereby, but in order to help supply the needs of his fellow-men. There is something wrong with himself or with his work unless he can enjoy in his labours something of this sense of useful purpose. His work should be his "vocation": that which he is "called" to do for the benefit of his fellows and for the Kingdom of God.

Some occupations and activities—those, for instance, of burglars and bogus company-promoters—clearly fall outside this definition. And about certain others I must confess to grave misgivings, such as bookmakers, money-lenders, and certain types of play-producers and film-producers—any, in fact, who make a living by preying on the weaknesses of or appealing to the animal in their fellow human beings. But, ruling these out and making all allowance for the industrial difficulties referred to above, there still remains a vast field of human labour in which a man can do his work for Christ and with Christ. Those last words are intended literally. To the Christian, as he works, belongs the intense joy of knowing that all his best labour, and the spirit he puts into it, are winning the approval of the Master Workman by his side. This deep certainty will sometimes flash across his consciousness, and irradiate the details of his daily task. “The man of romance,” Rostand has said, “is not he whose existence is diversified by the greatest possible number of extraordinary events, but he in whom the simplest occurrences produce the most live sensations.” Rostand is right. Both work and play take on new zest, new savour, when you share them with Him who is the “Unseen Playmate,” the Friend of all, the Elder Brother of humanity.

If, then, true work is “service,” he who wants to serve his generation will take pains to find out what is the *best* service he can render, and will try to avoid merely drifting into any job that happens to present itself. If, through education or other circumstances, he has any special gift or capacities

to offer, he will not suffer his area of choice to be less wide than the world. He will remember that, generally speaking, the *need* of human beings,—physical, mental and spiritual—is greater in Asia and Africa than it is in England,¹ and he will bear this in mind in choosing his “vocation”; and, if he is young and strong, he will be specially drawn to those people and places where the need is greatest, the life hardest, and the joy of selfless, adventurous service most assured.

IV

This chapter may close with a word to “religious workers.” I dislike the phrase, and only use it as a convenient way to describe those who spend all their time and energies in what is usually called “religious” or “social” work and receive a wage for their labours. If the argument of this book is sound, then the cobbler putting his best skill into mending shoes and doing it as his service to men and to God is doing “Christian work” as truly as the Archbishop of Canterbury. The difference between them lies in the area, scope and complexity of the service rendered. It is true that “religious” work does usually involve contact with other people in the deepest and most vital regions of human living. It is, therefore, by its nature, work peculiarly rich in opportunity, heavy with responsibility, and attended by considerable perils and pitfalls. Indeed

¹ It is not possible within the limits of this book to say anything in detail about the present needs and opportunities of the missionary enterprise.

there are many in our day who are questioning the desirability of any persons being wholly cut off from "secular" avocations and entirely set apart to "religious" work. To discuss this point would carry us beyond the scope of this chapter and book. Here I will only set down one or two considerations, which, as it appears to me, ought frequently to engage the attention of parsons, parish workers, organizers, secretaries and staff-workers of missionary and other Church societies, and other people in secretarial or administrative posts which exist to promote religious aims.

However obvious, it must be said—and perhaps needs to be said—that the first duty of the "religious" worker, as of every other worker, is to put his best into his work, and to go on doing that all the time. "Tell him never to look at the clock!" said Edison, the inventor, to someone who asked him what advice he should give to a young friend just launching on a career. And the diligence must be an *orderly* diligence. The ends of the Kingdom, as the objective of an army, are not served by bad staff-work. The chaos of this parson's writing-table, or the slovenliness of that society's office, or the financial methods of that Church, must be enough to make angels weep—or laugh! For many a religious worker the discipline of work—discipline as to time, quality and method—must be self-imposed if it is imposed at all. And undisciplined work is a third-best offering to make in such a service.

But, secondly, systematic industry must always be clearly and consciously related to a Purpose. Idle-

ness has been defined as activity without purpose. Which gives rise to the reflection that there must be a great many idle as well as unemployed in England to-day. It is so easy to become the slave of your own industry, the prisoner of your own organization, and to forget that the only point of all work is *more life*. It is a pathetic sign—and it is a sufficiently frequent sight in the Churches and religious societies—to see people wearing themselves out with exacting toil, and all the time they give you the impression of being so utterly immersed in working the machine as to have quite forgotten what the machinery is for. Along that road a man may become hard, mechanical, groovy, professional. And those are not qualities that create life, or commend Christ. Spiritual ends demand spiritual means; they require agents who can master and not be mastered by the machinery they must use.

There is no space here to discuss the many fine qualities which can be and often are brought to this difficult service. Two only will I name as this chapter closes. One is the power to work alongside other people cheerfully, patiently, and with a sympathetic loyalty that makes misunderstanding difficult and mistrust impossible. Some of the gravest obstacles to the Kingdom's progress, in our own land and in the mission field, are to be found in the fact that A cannot work with B, or B cannot work with C. Is there not something seriously wrong when that happens? Ought not a Christian *as such* to be particularly good at any kind of work partnership? Many of us can achieve that spirit, and the expression of it, in games, or in war; why

not in the greatest enterprise of all? The other quality I would name, as something without which a man's work—be he bishop or bell-ringer, clerk or curate, secretary or social worker—will be, for the most part, "mere sound and fury, signifying nothing," is—humility. "Oh yes, so-and-so: a good fellow, and a fine worker, but beginning to get his head a bit swelled. And the Bishop of blank: a great leader, with statesmanlike abilities, but what a pity that he is getting that sort of Bishop-self-consciousness which in the end spoils so many of them!" How often is that sort of thing said, or thought, by those who watch. After all, the only point of all "religious work" is to help people to see God. But they cannot see Him if their attention is always being diverted on to *you*. . . . The only way is Christ's way; and it takes a lifetime to learn it. "Last of all and servant of all" . . . "not to be ministered unto but to minister" . . . "not I, but Christ."

O Saviour Christ, who didst appear to Thy disciples while occupied in homely duties, I pray Thee manifest Thy presence to me in my daily work. May I find Thee in every hour, at every turn. Help me to give myself to no occupation in which I may not seek Thee. May I abide in Thee, and reap the promise which is given to all who abide in Thy love—the promise that Thou wilt make my heart Thine intimate abode. Amen.

Teach us, good Lord, to serve Thee as Thou

deservest, to give and not to count the cost, to fight and not to heed the wounds, to toil and not to seek for rest, to labour and not to ask for any reward, save that of knowing that we do Thy Will. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

IGNATIUS LOYOLA.

CHAPTER VI

CHRISTIANITY AND RECREATION

"He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: He leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul."—*Psalm* xxiii, 2, 3.

"Thus saith the Lord, I . . . will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem . . . and the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof."—*Zechariah* viii, 3, 5.

"A merry heart doeth good like a medicine."—*Proverbs* xvii, 22.

"No pedantry can make you men!
Yours are the morning and the day,
You should be taught of wind and light,
Your learning should be born of play."

GEORGE WINTHROP YOUNG.

"God who created me
Nimble and light of limb,
In three elements free
To run, to ride, to swim:
Not when the sense is dim,
But now from the heart of joy,
I would remember Him:
Take the thanks of a boy."

H. C. BEECHING.

"There is nothing so good for the inside of a man as the outside of a horse."—LORD AVEBURY.

CHAPTER VI

CHRISTIANITY AND RECREATION

I

NOBODY wants to live only half a life. The whole life and rich life which all desire must possess a certain rhythm and balance, work alternating with rest and recreation. "All work and no play" makes for sheer boredom; and when a man is constantly bored, then much of his capacity for living is seriously blunted.

We have looked at some of the principles that should govern a Christian in his work. Are there also principles which he may apply to his recreation? Certainly there are. As we have already seen, God is concerned with everything in our daily living; there is no area in human life that is alien to Jesus Christ. And if we ask what His mind is about recreation, surely the answer would be, having regard to all He said about "life," that recreation should be truly *recreative*. That is to say, it should put a keener edge on life itself; it should be effective in recouping and revitalizing the healthy energies of body and mind; it should make for an all-round fitness, physical, mental and spiritual. Others besides Christians would doubtless find themselves in agreement with such a view of recreation.

But that agreement might not extend to a point which for the Christian is crucial, namely, the question of *motive*. Anyone who throws in his lot with Christ has perforce to part company, completely in theory, progressively in practice, with selfishness. He learns to desire "life," and all the thousand experiences, recreation included, that make up life, not simply because it is a very pleasant thing to be alive, but mainly because "live" people (who are not necessarily agile intellectually or physically) are the most effective agents in spreading the Kingdom of God. And this great purpose of sharing life¹ will rightly colour all his thinking and all his practice in the matter of recreation. It will not make him priggish or puritanical; but it will prompt him to be careful about bringing all his recreation and amusements within the circle of his life with God.

II

Not long ago I had occasion, on my way to preach in a distant church, to pass through a number of country villages on a Sunday afternoon. In every village I observed several groups of younger men and older boys lounging about doing absolutely nothing; and I have no doubt a similar sight could have been seen that afternoon in nearly every town and village in England. Now occasional idleness is right enough; everyone likes sometimes to lie on his back and think of nothing, or smoke a pipe with his friends and talk of nothing in particular. But habitual lounging is another thing. And the cause of it

¹ Cf. above, Chapter IV.

surely lies in the fact that those who lounge simply do not know how to employ their hours of recreation. Better far that the young men of a village should join in organized games of a Sunday afternoon than loaf at street corners.

It is probable that those who read these lines are conscious of the fact that to waste recreation is to waste priceless opportunities of exploring life's unknown territories. They will probably realize also that the essence of recreation is change of activity. Rest is active as well as passive. A miner or a porter might rest himself by sitting down to read; a clerk from an office would find more rest in a strenuous game of football or a hard row on the river. "The philosopher will dig in his garden on a Sunday, while his gardener philosophizes."

In considering the many different forms of amusement and recreation which are open to him, the Christian will naturally rule out any that are questionable on moral grounds—such, for instance, as might involve cruelty to man or beast, or would be likely to work moral harm to those who take part in them. But after making this limitation there is still left a vastly wide field of choice. A form of recreation which is both cheap and simple, and which may be said to be indispensable to all normal people, is the habit of reading. To open a book—provided you know what book to open and how to absorb its contents—is to pass through a gate into a new and wonderful world. How odd that, out of the vast numbers who have learnt to read (in the literal and technical sense) there should be so few who keep in their pockets the key of that gate.

Among the obstacles that keep men out of the Kingdom of truth and beauty stands, like a great hedge of barbed wire, our lack of education. "How can you expect," complains one who has a right to be heard on this subject, "people to amuse themselves spiritually and intelligently if they have not been taught to understand true and beautiful things—if such things have, rather, been steadily rubbed out of them from their earliest childhood?"¹ And this lack of education is by no means confined to those who left school at fourteen to be absorbed into the industrial machine. There are plenty who ought to know better whose normal mental food, on work-days and holidays, is represented by a popular daily, with news and arguments served up in best "journalese," one or two monthly magazines of the kind that has the inevitable feminine face on the cover, and a few third-rate novels. Many years ago I had an experience of sanatorium life, cut off from any outdoor games or hobbies involving physical exertion. Never shall I forget the piteous boredom of some of my fellow-invalids (one or two of them English public school men) when they found themselves reduced to *reading* as their only main occupation! Their despair was comic (or tragic) to witness. They perfectly illustrated the saying that "to the alert mind everything is an adventure, to the dullard everything is a bore."

Yet, even in after life, with a little guidance from wise advisers, a willingness to make some mental effort and a very small expenditure of money, the

¹ The Rev. Percy Dearmer, D.D., *Southend Church Congress Report*, p. 278.

gate into the world of books may be opened, and the pilgrim set forth on an altogether fascinating journey through a wide and unexplored country. With the poets he will lift up his eyes to the beauty, the romance, the eternities of life; with the scientists he will probe its physical marvels; with the historians he will watch the long pageant of its human story; with the philosophers he will seek to understand the deep mystery of its beginning and its end; while in fiction and biography he will make friends with a goodly company of men and women whom he will be the better for knowing. And as he wanders through this wonderful land he will gain a sense of values and proportion and perspective which will have a transfiguring effect on the cramped spaces of his own little life.¹

What is true of literature is true also of most sensible hobbies; they are open doors into new worlds. Drawing, sketching, photography, carpentering, gardening; the study of botany, geology, architecture—these, and other similar pursuits, do give the mind just that change of activity that it needs, and at the same time open up new worlds of wonder and interest; they make the man a more complete man, and therefore, it may be justly claimed, a better Christian. For the most part they need little apparatus; the only conditions they

¹ Compare what Robert Lynd has said about the function of poetry, in his introduction to *An Anthology of Modern Verse*, p. xviii: "It enables him to escape out of the make-believe existence of everyday in which perhaps an employer seems more huge and immanent than God, and to explore reality, where God and love and beauty and life and death are seen in truer proportions, and where the desire of the heart is at least brought within sight of a goal."

demand are a certain amount of intelligent interest and of willingness to learn. One may be permitted to wonder how many of those who read these lines have ever taken the trouble to explore and understand the places of architectural or historical interest that are to be found in their own town or village or immediate locality. How blind and slow we are where things of beauty and interest are too familiar or too accessible!

Brief reference must here be made—and the present writer has good cause to make it—to the very high recreational value of outdoor games. They may be overdone in some public schools, just as in less favoured schools, and in big industrial towns, there are too few facilities for those who would wish to play.¹ But there can be no question that, for the ordinary man and woman, a moderate playing of games is a factor in life of considerable importance. It supplies a discipline of the body which is invaluable; it directly promotes physical and mental health; and, in the case of team games, it has a real contribution to make to that “fellowship” which Christians desire to establish in the

¹To discuss “Sunday observance” is beyond the scope of this chapter. (Reference may be permitted to the Chapter on “Sunday,” in *A Faith that Works*). But the writer would venture to record his opinion that many of the recreations here referred to can be and should be enjoyed on a Sunday. For a large number of busy people there is little opportunity to enjoy them save on a Sunday. A Christian will naturally use his Sunday for the chief purpose of getting to know God better: a purpose which is in harmony with the secondary aims of recreating body and soul. All three aims must be pursued unselfishly, and with due regard to other people’s Sunday; and if any of them involve more work for a servant or servants, they should be modified or abandoned. Have friends to tea, by all means; but do the washing up yourself.

world. In drawing attention to these ultimate benefits from outdoor games I do not mean for a moment to suggest—surely a priggish suggestion—that such ideas can be or should be consciously in the mind during play. The chief joy of a game is the self-abandonment with which you play it—all else is forgotten in the attempt to arrive at the tape first, to cross the line for a try, to get the hockey ball into the net, or the golf ball into the hole, or whatever the immediate objective of the game may be. Indeed, where there is even a moderate degree of excelling, mastery in a game, won by toil and pains, does bring you, for the moment, to the top of one of the peaks of human living. The feel of a racing eight as she lifts under you, like a live thing, with the eight blades gripping the water in perfect time; the half-volley at cricket lifted fair and square beyond the boundary; the clean “smash” at lawn tennis or the exactly timed top-spin drive down the side line just beyond your opponent’s reach; the swerving, slippery run at rugger till you are past the back and between the posts; the long, low drive at golf, dead straight, to the very edge of the green; the jump which just clears the bar, the spurt which just breasts the tape—here are bits of experience in which one may taste something of the buoyancy, the gaiety, the keen-edged zest of human living. And I dare to say that the man who, not spoiling his games by selfish interest or selfish ambition, learns to fit these buoyant experiences into life’s larger whole, will find in them none other than Jesus Christ Himself. . . . He, the giver of “life abundant” is

to be found, by those who look for Him, as surely in the playing fields as in those places where men are deliberately gathered together in His Name.

III

We may next consider that which, in larger or smaller measure, forms a part of most people's recreation, namely *amusements*. It is an obvious fact that amusements bulk very large in modern life. They "amuse" an enormous number of people, and the provision of them employs an appreciable section of the population. Indeed the mass forms of recreation and amusement, such as the cinema and the spectacular professional football matches, constitute a serious problem which can hardly be dealt with here. These amusements, like other leisure-hour occupations such as gambling, need to be considered in relation to that which largely determines their character, namely, the deadly monotony of work which is the lot of the majority of town-dwellers to-day. This chapter does not attempt to do more than to discuss Christianity and recreation with those whose education has continued after the age of fourteen and who do not spend every working day within the iron grip of our present industrial system.

The first point for the Christian to be clear about is that the desire for amusement, the wish to find something to minister to our faculty for laughter, is a natural and healthy instinct. I should suspect something gravely wrong with the mental make-up of anyone who could see nothing funny in the antics

of a clown, or on whose face a good jest evoked no smile. "Healthy laughter is the salt of life." It lends savour to much that without it would be flat and stale. Where there is no laughter there is a diminution of life; and He, Christ, had nothing to do with diminishing life; it was more, not less, life that He came to bring. Who can doubt that He and His circle of friends must have enjoyed many a laugh together? May we, at this point, apply the argument which runs like a thread all through this book? Christianity has to do with the whole area of human living without any exception; that which is wrong it will destroy or redeem, and all the vast remainder it will irradiate, transmute, intensify. And yet men go on trying to raft off bits of life as irreclaimable, or at least as neutral. In particular have they done this with amusements. There may still be found religious people who are suspicious of amusements, or who, even if they recognize them as legitimate, regard them as having nothing to do with religion.

I would venture to assert that the attempt, sometimes taken in hand, to push this instinct for amusement outside the Kingdom of God is one of the greatest mistakes that religion has ever made. Canon Guy Rogers, in an admirable paper on *The Church and Amusements*, notes the fact that in the early days of the Y.M.C.A. *Punch* was excluded from its reading-rooms because, apparently, it was not sufficiently serious. "It is no part of the Y.M.C.A. to provide amusements or recreations for its members," was a common statement of policy; and when zealous secretaries went so far as to say,

"no Christian young man should take part in a swimming match, or indeed a match of any kind," there was no one to enjoy the joke! Dr. Dale and Archbishop Trench received a severe rebuke from the official organ of the Society because they ventured to take part in the Tercentenary Shakespeare Celebrations at Stratford church. They were accused, in the sonorous language of the day, of "trailing their Christian priesthood in the dust by offering homage at the shrine of a dead playwright!"

Now it ought to be recognized that this attitude of complete disapproval of all amusements, however strange it may seem to us, was in fact the expression of a natural and vigorous reaction against the coarseness and sensuality of many of the amusements of that day. It was, as Puritanism has always been, a protest against the encroachments of godlessness on some of life's fair spaces. But it does unquestionably represent a maimed religion. There may indeed come times, as in a debased society, when the individual who would do right has no option but to break completely with human activities which, not necessarily wrong in themselves, have become, for him and his day, hopelessly entangled with evil. Then there is nothing for it, as Christ said plainly, but to cut off the offending hand or pluck out the eye. But that, as He showed also, is a desperate remedy, and it means a maimed life. It is safe to say that in our own day, while there is much that is morally perilous and even indisputably evil in contemporary amusements, the general conditions are not such as to justify the Christian in

regarding and treating amusements generally as outside the Kingdom of God. It is, moreover, a shallow and arbitrary judgment—one still too prevalent in some religious circles—which would identify “the world” with this or that particular amusement. “Love not the world nor the things that are in the world”: as Christians we want to obey that precept, but there is no short cut to obedience to be had by deciding that “the world” means the theatre, or going to dances, or attending race-meetings. Unfortunately “the world” cannot be thus labelled and disposed of; as many of us have learnt by now, “the world” is really an inner temper or attitude which gets up with us in the morning and lies down with us at night, and can express itself in all sorts of ways that have nothing whatever to do with amusements. Nor have we any right frankly to abandon fair tracts of God’s world to the enemy. There are too many people who still cling to the timid and ancient superstition that the devil has all the best tunes! That contracting of life in the supposed interests of righteousness, that building of fences in the vain hope of shutting out sin and shutting in holiness, is an operation which will receive little encouragement from an honest study of the earthly life of Jesus Himself, with all its sanity, its freedom, its happy comradeship, its hatred of cant and its limitless belief in the possibilities of human goodness. We should surely be closer to *His* mind if we set ourselves to reclaim for the Kingdom of God everything human which is redeemable.

Let us, in order to test the ideal thus set forth,

consider in the light of it two of the commonest amusements of our day—as, indeed, of all time—namely, the theatre and dancing. It is clear that the drama is as fundamental and normal a part of human creative capacity as the power to paint or write or make music. And, as one of our leading actresses has pointed out, the Church should be “more preoccupied with the theatre than with any of the other arts, for the reason that the drama has so direct a bearing on the mentality of the people and the conduct of life.”¹ In fact all will agree that the theatre might be one of the highest and purest forms of our amusements. How, in practice, may such an end be attained? Not, assuredly, by good people condemning the stage on account of what they call the “life behind.” That is no solution. I should like to endorse what my friend Canon Rogers has said, and what is often forgotten, that “it is no more possible to distinguish between the purity or muddiness of the people who sing or play or dance to you than it is to distinguish between the different sources from which your money comes or the morality of the writers whose books you read. When people talk about and isolate the evil environment of the stage, they forget that there is an evil environment also in politics; that our organized business life constitutes a far more difficult medium than the stage for living a Christian life, and that behind the whole of our social life lies an unchristianized social order.” The discrimination required of those who want to see the stage function-

¹ Miss Sybil Thorndike on “The Aims and Ideals of the Stage,” *Southend Church Congress Report*, p. 271.

ing within the Kingdom of God is to support the kind of theatres and plays that make for that end and to discountenance those that do not. If a Christian should find himself looking on at a play or a scene that is disgusting, he should have the strength of mind to walk out, and to write and tell the management why he did so. The matter is, in the last resort, in the hands of the public. If more people cared, and showed that they cared, for good plays and for clean and clever entertainments, such as may be seen at several London theatres, then we should be less plagued and victimized by the feeble and suggestive stuff which the ignorance of too many producers supposes the public to want.

As to dancing. Here, again, no sane Christian of to-day would condemn all dancing as wrong or approve any dancing as rightful recreation. All depends on the kind of dancing, the kind of company, and the kind of environment. There is hardly any amusement, it has been pointed out, that suffers so much from the tyranny of absurd fashions. The necessary discrimination will not be impossible of attainment for anyone who is honestly trying to judge and to act in such things as a Christian gentleman or gentlewoman. Dancing which means mere "promiscuous intimacy of contact" and pulls down the sex relationship on to the lower levels is obviously bad. On the other hand, whether in more modern forms or in the revived folk-dances, dancing may be, and often is, a thing of rhythm and beauty, and can express what is noble as well as what is ignoble in the relations

of the sexes. But those who care for the values of the Kingdom will watch the matter of quantity as well as that of quality. I can hardly think that a Christian man or a Christian girl, however pure and healthy their love of dancing, would be able to spare the thought and time and energy for several dances a week. Recreation must, after all, always be servant and not master.

IV

There is only one more word that may be added, and it should be said very plainly. For the Christian disciple, his whole view of life and his whole way of living must, at every point, take into account the Cross of Jesus Christ. That richness of life, physical, mental, spiritual, for which all men hunger, which he, the Christian, longs fully to experience and to share, is inseparably connected with the death of Jesus. He, its giver, Himself entered life by the gate of death, Himself was made perfect by the things that He suffered; it is the wounds in His hands and feet that give His love, the very love of God Himself; its unique power to heal and redeem. We therefore, servants of the Crucified, will be content to sit loose to this world's pleasures. We will not forget that we are disciples of Him who, on earth, knew no luxuries and had not even where to lay His head. In all our fun and recreation, gratefully accepted and enjoyed as His own gift, we shall never be wholly unmindful of the submerged multitudes, friends of His, shut out from the shining land. We shall learn, like St. Paul, to travel light; with a happy self-suffi-

ciency¹ to be equally content with much or with little of those things that make life pleasant. And, like the Master Himself, we shall, with high-hearted resolve, learn to put *the Cause* before everything else, and to find our greatest joy in willing sacrifice.

¹ Cf. Phil. iv, 11, *αὐτάρκης*—"I have learned how to be content wherever I am. . . . I have been initiated into the secret for all sorts and conditions of life, for plenty and for hunger, for prosperity and for privations."

And cf. too, 2 Cor. vi, 10: "as having nothing and yet possessing all things."



CHAPTER VII

CHRISTIANITY AND MONEY

"Jesus spake a parable unto them saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: and he reasoned within himself saying, What shall I do, because I have not where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my corn and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool. . . ."—*St. Luke* xii, 16-20.

"It is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful."—*1 Corinthians* iv, 2.

"There is that maketh himself rich, yet hath nothing: There is that maketh himself poor, yet hath great wealth."—*Proverbs* xiii, 7.

"The poor man wanteth many things, but the covetous man wants all. Oh, that there should be such boundless desires in our little bodies."—*SENECA*.

"It is probably much happier to live in a small house, and have Warwick Castle to be astonished at, than to live in Warwick Castle, and have nothing to be astonished at."—*RUSKIN*.

"What I saved, I lost;
What I spent, I had;
What I gave, I have."

Epitaph.

CHAPTER VII

CHRISTIANITY AND MONEY

WHAT is money? The question appears to be a simple one; but the *Encyclopædia Britannica* has to admit that there is no simple answer to it. You can only define money in terms of function. Money in itself, untouched and unused, is nothing; hence the grotesqueness of the miser's hoard of glittering coins. The point of money is in the range of things it can *do*. In a rough-and-ready fashion it may be described as a form of power. It enables you to exchange goods; if you have clothes to sell and want bread, and your neighbour has bread and wants clothes, money provides a standard of value, and a currency, whereby the exchange can be easily effected. Its range of function is indeed enormous. Without it, in a civilized community, there is no life to be had worth calling life. With it, you can make the world minister to your necessities and your convenience, your tastes and your pleasures, your aims and your ideals. Through it, by spending and by giving, you can express your personality, you can make some effective impact on your generation. Indeed, with sufficient money you may purchase power which emperors of old might have envied; you may buy newspapers and influence millions, and go far to shape a bit of the world to your liking.

I

In a book called *Success*, written by Lord Beaverbrook, there are two words which occur in every chapter, if not on every page: the words "money" and "power." In fact, the author's idea of success is expressed almost exclusively in terms of money and power. Fame, for instance, in his view, "is only another name for either money or power." If you want to find Reality, he says in effect, handling money is the way to do it. It is only "money striven for that brings with it the real qualities in life." "The money brain is, in the modern world, the supreme brain."

Now it has to be admitted that the Beaverbrook gospel is swallowed and practised by a very large number of people.¹ The acquisitive and possessive instinct is present in all of us, and dominant in many of us; and it is money or power that most people try to acquire. It is easy for the moralist to condemn off-hand this devotion to a life of getting and having. It should, however, be remembered that the desire to succeed is not in itself a bad thing, and that some successful men, especially those high up in the industrial world, are spurred on less by a wish to amass a fortune than by the sheer delight of solving problems and mastering difficulties. There is much in what R. L. Stevenson has said, that the true blessedness of mankind is not to arrive but to travel. But when all allowance has been made for this motive, it still remains true that, unless he is exceptionally situated

¹ The misuse of money is obviously one of the chief causes of the present economic distress and confusion (1933). Cf. p. 59.

or very resolute in pursuing his ideals, the ordinary man who wants to "succeed" finds himself competing in the fields of money-getting. And, again and again, to enter those lists involves, almost inevitably, becoming selfish and hard and covetous. *To have* becomes, insensibly, the main end of human living; the interests of property come to take precedence of all other claims and values. Lord Macaulay once said that "if the multiplication-table had interfered with any vested interests, some people would not have believed it yet."¹

With this view of money, and the way of living it involves, the Christian has quite definitely to part company. It is a question of values, with irreconcilable alternatives; the "money-loving herd" chooses one of them; he, as a Christian, chooses the other. He cannot, of course, do without money (we shall see, in a moment, what principles should govern his use of it); he may, indeed, be in a position in the financial or commercial world where he has to handle, conceivably to acquire, large sums of it; but, as a follower of Jesus, he will never attempt to get it simply for his own selfish use or to gratify his own desires. He has to recognize the total incompatibility of serving God and "mammon." There is no subject on which Christ's teaching is more explicit and more emphatic than on the moral evil of loving money. He was constantly trying to make men see that man's true life consisteth not in the abundance of things that he possesses; that life's real treasures are such as no moth or rust can corrupt, or thieves take away; and that engrossing love of money may damage a man's character

¹ Quoted by Fosdick, *The Meaning of Service*, p. 186.

beyond repair.¹ Naturally, there can be no compromise between this view of money and that expressed, for instance, in Lord Beaverbrook's book already referred to. Yet of all the compromises that religious people, with human weakness, fumble after, none is commoner than the attempt to mix religion and money-making. It is a pathetic sight to see such an one bewildered and exhausted by "the hopeless toil of living two lives . . . with one eye on this world and one on the next, part of his life given to God and part withheld, backing two horses at once and never knowing quite which he wants to win."²

II

None of us is wholly guiltless where religious compromising is concerned. But suppose that we do at least *want* to follow Christ in the matter of our money and material possessions, how are we to set about it and what will it actually involve? What are the principles on which the Christian is to regulate his use of money? The first and obvious use of money, for everyone, is governed by the necessity of maintaining life at a reasonable level of satisfaction and efficiency. Christ showed that in God's sight every human life has an absolute value, both for what it is and what it may become. This means, in our world, that every man ought (normally) to have the opportunity of earning enough money to keep himself and his family in health, and,

¹ St. Luke xii, 15, St. Matthew vi, 19, xiii, 22; cf. 1 Timothy vi, 9-11. Cf. also St. Luke xvi, 19 f. (great possessions causing selfish indolence); St. Luke xii, 13 f. (fellowship, spoilt by covetousness); St. Luke xii, 16 f. (business men heaping up wealth).

² T. W. Pym, *Psychology and the Christian Life*, p. 101.

beyond bare necessities, to have a sufficient share in such boons as education and leisure as to secure for living a certain measure of fullness. Let me hasten to add (what has been pointed out in another connection) that, for the Christian, fullness of life can never be a merely selfish aim; it is the means whereby he may play his part in the whole scheme of things and fit in with, and further, the Plan of God.

With this general statement as to the ordinary, and proper, use of money, most people would probably agree. One or two reflections, however, at once suggest themselves. In the first place, we are faced with the staggering fact that even a modest minimum of satisfying life is quite beyond the reach of a vast number of the present population of the world. With such a state of affairs true philanthropy can never rest satisfied. The principle of the living wage is one way of giving concrete expression to this ideal of equality of opportunity.¹ Every adult ought to have some "socially serviceable" means of earning a wage sufficient to give him and his family some real share in Life. And this is a claim which the Church should back, in the name of Christianity, with all the weight of its authority. Too often has history found it siding with the "haves" as against the "have nots."

But what is a fair share of "Life"? What is a reasonable, average level of "personal civilization" (if the phrase may be used) with which a Christian ought to be content? Obviously the capacity to live, in the word's deeper senses, will vary with the infinite variety of different people. But is there some normal setting of life—the kind of setting which

¹ Cf. above, p. 80.

money can procure—which ought to satisfy? How much ought I, as a Christian, to spend, for myself and my family, on food and house, on comfort and convenience, on education and recreation? Such questions are easier to ask than to answer. Indeed it is doubtful if there is any one answer which is applicable to all. Each must find his own answer, in the light of Christ and his own conscience. What may rather be suggested is, not a universal standard but a universal *test*—the test of efficiency, physical and spiritual, in the service of the Kingdom. With due regard to my individual capacities, and to my particular circumstances, and with due regard also to the dispossessed multitudes, what is the minimum I need to make me fit to play my part in life as a Christian citizen? That is the kind of question a Christian might well ask himself.

One other consideration may be mentioned at this point. The Christian, as such, will weigh carefully not merely the way in which he uses his money, but the method by which he gets it. It has to be admitted that it is easier to state this principle than to indicate with precision how it may be acted upon.¹ In the closely woven interdependence of modern industry, it is very difficult for an individual to strike out a line of his own in money affairs or business affairs. Where the system as a whole makes for selfishness, it is hard to live and work within it unselfishly; if most people in your line of trade are out simply for profits, it is far from easy to run your own business on a basis of service. But, as many

¹ Cf. Fosdick, *The Meaning of Service*, p. 184: "‘Thou shalt not covet’ sounds well in the abstract, but it becomes perplexing when one adds, ‘Thou shall not covet thy neighbour’s customers!’ ”

Christian business men have splendidly shown, "where there's a will there's a way," and Christianity need not be left out of the making of money. And the man who is determined to follow Christ will simply refuse to sell his services to, or invest his money in, any business that is not in its main intention useful to the community, and that does not treat with equity and humane consideration those who work for it. Only by such action, concerted and on a large scale, can we Christians prove the ultimate fallacy of the common assumption that covetousness and selfishness are the only effective economic motives. As G. A. Studdert-Kennedy has finely claimed, "We hold a different view of man . . . we hold that men are now to some extent not economically determined but God-determined beings, and that they can become more and more God-determined beings."¹

III

Let us pursue this question of money use to a further stage. The majority of people, after providing for life's necessities, are left with a certain margin, large or small as the case may be. On what principle is this margin of money-power to be used? There is a clear Christian answer to this question. Reference has already been made to the Christian warning as to the moral peril always latent in money. If it is easy to become selfish and covetous in the process of getting money, that fatal habit of thought and life is perhaps still easier to develop in the matter of using your "margin." There is many a man, with money to spare, who is

¹ *St. Martin's Review*, No. 368, p. 450.

for ever extending the circle of his "necessities," until, by a gradual process of self-deception, the larger house, the second car, the extra servant, the fresh comfort or convenience—or, on another scale, the extra drink or the more frequent cinema visit—are all considered essential to natural and normal living. Not that he, or she, is deliberately covetous; he simply does not think—and most selfishness is born of not thinking. And behind the lack of thought the real motives operate: the instinctive desires to be extra safe, or extra comfortable, or to be like so-and-so, or to impress the neighbours. In such fashion "money gets into the saddle and spares neither whip nor spur."

For the use of this money "margin," Christianity has another and a better way. Christianity never says it is wrong to possess any margin; but it suggests clear principles for its use. These principles may be summed up in two words. One of them is *detachment*. The Christian cannot remind himself too often that, for him, material things can never be sought for their own sakes: that his "life consisteth not in the abundance of things that he possesseth." Therefore, he will sit loose to material possessions as to material enjoyments.¹ He will refuse to give over-much of thought and energy to that which the moth and rust doth corrupt. He will not refuse responsibilities which he should clearly accept; but he will endeavour to avoid being encumbered with an undue amount of personal property and personal privilege. He will avoid an exaggerated scrupulousness, and will try to learn

¹ Cf. above, p. 128.

the secret of detachment, being neither put about if he has to go short nor softened when things are comfortable.

"And if to-night mine inn be good,
I shall be glad;
But if to-morrow's fare be rude,
And lodging bad,
It shall be so much easier then
To strike my tent, and on again."¹

The other guiding word is *stewardship*. The principle of stewardship in relation to all gifts, whether of character or property, is clearly laid down in the parables of the Talents and the Pounds.² All that I have is in no sense my absolute property to do with just as I like; it is held in trust for God and His Kingdom, and I am responsible to Him for a faithful discharge of my stewardship. This is a far-reaching principle. You may be able to justify, at the bar of your conscience, this or that expenditure, as tending directly or indirectly to promote the ends of the Kingdom. What cannot be justified, if you recognize your stewardship, is irresponsible expenditure. Gambling is an obvious instance of irresponsible expenditure. Why, it is often asked, is it right for one to spend ten shillings on a book, or a theatre, or a game of golf, or any other favourite hobby or recreation, and wrong for another, who enjoys racing, to spend his ten shillings by putting it on a horse? I should answer unhesitatingly that, as God's steward, I have no kind of right either to part with money I hold, or to receive another man's money, in a purely irresponsible fashion. Stewards may not do that; "it is required in stewards that a

¹ Walter C. Smith. ² St. Matthew xxv, 14-30; St. Luke xix, 11-27.

man be found faithful." Moreover, if, among Church people generally, there was less of the idea that it is rather fine generosity to give £1 or £100 to this or that part of the work of God's Kingdom, and rather more of the idea that the Kingdom's members would, as the natural and normal thing, lay out their trust funds in the Kingdom's interests, we should hear less of recurrent financial crises in Church societies.

IV

How, precisely, is this stewardship to be discharged? What are the most effective ways in which this margin of money-power can be used for good? One or two practical suggestions may be offered. First and obviously, a certain proportion of any margin should be devoted to helping those who are short of life's necessities. From the earliest times this has always been recognized as a fundamental Christian duty. Indeed, as I have already shown in the chapter on "Sharing Life," some Christians feel this duty to be so urgent that, besides giving of their "margin," they endeavour, for Christ's sake, to practise a voluntary equality in the standard of living.¹ In any case, while so many of his brother men are in such desperate need, every true Christian will feel it impossible to spend large sums on his private needs or pleasures, and he will eagerly seek for ways in which he can use his money-power to help stem physical distress at home and abroad. He will always realize that the Kingdom of God is concerned not merely with "saving souls," but

¹ Cf. p. 80.

with the provision of all that makes for abundant life.

Then, further, it is clearly right and Christian that a certain amount of everyone's money should be devoted to the common benefit of the community in the form of taxes. The Christian Churches might well give more teaching and inspiration in this matter. Why does one hardly ever hear a sermon on the meaning and the duty of tax-paying from a Christian point of view? It needs to be asserted emphatically that a Christian, as a Christian, ought to be scrupulously honest and invincibly cheerful in paying his rates and taxes. We should not miss the significance of our Master's plain words about this. "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's."¹ That "*and*" is a Hebrew expression which roughly corresponds to our phrase "and so." "Give the State what is due to the State, and so, in doing this, you will be giving God what is His—you will be performing a duty which *He* lays upon you."

Whatever remains of money-power's margin should clearly be applied, directly or indirectly, to furthering the aims of the Kingdom of God. It is, of course, true that, in the last resort, the most effective way of spreading the Kingdom is by the quiet, penetrating, unobtrusive leaven of personal influence and personal service, which costs nothing: nothing, that is, that can be expressed in terms of money. But it is also true that any form of corporate and organized Christian activity, such as maintaining Churches, paying ministers, running clubs, printing Bibles, spreading literature, sending

¹ St. Matthew, xxii, 21.

out missionaries and so forth, cannot possibly be carried on without money. To transfer Christians from a more favoured to a less favoured country—from say, England to Central Africa or Turkestan—in order thus to share our life with those who are even more needy than we, cannot be done without a large expenditure. And wherever you attempt to Christianize environment, here or elsewhere—which you must do if you want to share all that makes up life—then you are at once and inevitably committed to a number of tasks of a material kind, travelling, transporting, building, printing, feeding, doctoring and so on, all of which are completely dependent on forms of power which money alone can provide. Money is, in fact, “the most portable shape into which human personality can precipitate itself”; your money provides an almost magical way in which you can supply personal needs, and respond to personal calls thousands of miles away on the other side of the globe.

Never was it harder than it is to-day to find the needed money for the many Christian and philanthropic enterprises. This difficulty is no doubt partly due to the world-wide economic distress. But the larger part of the difficulty would be removed if more Christians could come to see that to spend money on the Kingdom is not a pious “extra” or a particularly laudable act to be seen and praised by men, but a plain, ordinary Christian duty and a matter of normal Christian stewardship. How could it be otherwise with the children of Him who so loved the world that He gave all, even His only Son?

CHAPTER VIII
CHRISTIANITY AND SEX

"The Word was made flesh."—*St. John* i, 14.

"Whatever a man sows, that will he also reap. He who sows in the field of his lower nature, will from that nature reap a harvest of destruction and ruin; but he who sows to serve the Spirit will from the Spirit reap life eternal."—*Galatians* vi, 7, 8 (Weymouth's version).

"Life is only incidentally physical. It is really an astounding spiritual phenomenon."—VIDA SCUDDER.

"No man has ever dared to call Jesus, in any opprobrious sense, sexless: yet in character He stands above, and, if one may use the term, midway between the sexes,—His comprehensive humanity a veritable storehouse of the ideals we associate with *both* the sexes. No woman has ever had any more difficulty than men have had in finding in Him the realized ideal."—G. A. JOHNSTON ROSS.

"He is the half part of a blessed man
Left to be finished by such as she;
And she a fair divided excellence,
Whose fullness of perfection lies in him."

SHAKESPEARE.

"Dear Lord and Father of mankind,
Forgive our foolish ways!
Re-clothe us in our rightful mind,
In purer lives Thy service find,
In deeper reverence praise."

J. G. WHITTIER.

CHAPTER VIII

CHRISTIANITY AND SEX

I

No book which sets out to describe and explain "every-day religion" can be silent about a deep-down human instinct which, for every man and woman, is one of the great shaping forces of life. To shut our eyes to the power of the sex instinct is foolish and futile; wiser is it to seek to understand it and its true place and function in human living.

This chapter is an attempt to state, simply and plainly, what the writer believes to be the Christian view in a matter which, in some directions, raises very complex questions. Let me begin by referring to two ideas which are common but not Christian. One is the notion, bequeathed to us from the Victorian age, that the whole sex instinct, with a great deal of its expression, is at bottom something not quite decent, something which should be hushed up and kept a mystery, something which "nice" people should not discuss even in intimate conversation. There must be many men and women who find it hard to shake off the idea, implanted in childhood and fostered during school years, that Nature's processes of birth are mysteries which are not really quite respectable; and it is such people who are too prone to meet children's questions on these things

with evasions and falsehoods, thus often driving the boys and girls to get their information from undesirable and grimy sources. And so in their turn, they, as they grow up, never wholly escape from the dreadful fallacy that there is something in sex that is essentially base and depraved. That is a mischievous fallacy. It is the unclean minds of men that have read into the wonder and beauty of the sex relationship a shame and an indecency which in truth are not there. If God is in creation, if Nature is His garment and her activities the outcome of His working, if in Christ He became man with a body like unto our bodies—then every capacity and function of the human organism has a high and holy use, a use within the moral order of His Kingdom.

The other attitude towards matters of sex which is as common as it is un-Christian, is that which may be described as unabashed animalism. This view sees the sex relationship either simply as Nature's way of propagating the species, or as something to be exploited for the sensual pleasure it may yield. In some form or other this base form of materialism begrimes with its foul fingers much of the life of our day. It provides copy for the newspapers, subjects for nasty plays, themes for third-rate novelists, material for morbid and ignorant amateur psychologists; it muddies the minds of boys and girls, degrades friendship, spoils marriages, breaks up homes, ruins health, and is the direct cause of the monster evils of prostitution and venereal disease. It is a canker that has before now destroyed empires, and is still capable, if unchecked, of gnawing away the vitals of our modern civilization.

It is the main assumption behind all this mass of evil which no Christian can entertain for a moment. Most of what is wrong in sex relationships to-day, as at all times, is due to the idea, and the fallacious idea, that man is after all an animal, and cannot be expected to free himself wholly from animal instincts and animal pleasures, and that therefore an evil such as prostitution is quite inevitable. I remember, in War days, many a talk about these things with soldier friends. I noticed that men of high ideals, themselves straight and clean, not infrequently voiced, or at least accepted, the view that sexual vice must be; that it has an almost normal place in the community, and that for the ordinary virile man it is a natural and practically legitimate satisfaction of a universal physical need. They did not seem seriously to face the question that to satisfy such a need in such a way must involve the utter degradation of a large number of women, with the infinitely terrible outrage on personality which that degradation entails. The fallacy, the complete wrong-headedness—as I see it—of that view of vice lies in the way in which it isolates man's physical capacities and functions from other parts of his being. It says, in effect, that because man is descended from an animal it is only "natural" that he should in some ways behave like one. If this argument is sound, then we might well go into the street and imitate a puppy chasing its tail, or wolf our food in a solitary corner like a dog with a bone. Yet ordinary human decency knows perfectly well that the fact of a man's animal ancestry is no kind of justification for his breaking the higher laws which govern him as a human being.

And Christianity has always proclaimed that the essential thing in every man, and every woman, is his kinship with God and not his affinity with the beasts of the field.

Not in sex matters only, but at a hundred different points in life, we are always being confronted by these two tremendous alternatives. We are given the choice between humanity and animism; we are free to follow the higher road or the lower, and those who choose with Christ's men will find a hard battle and a stiff climb before them. The Christian way in sex relationships leads to uplands of unimaginable beauty and wonder, but the path is steep and there are no short cuts. The demands are severe, like those of which Gareth and his companions were warned by the old Seer as they stood for the first time, astonished and expectant, outside the gateway of King Arthur's wonder city:

"Yet take thou heed of him, for, so thou pass
Beneath this archway, then wilt thou become
A thrall to his enchantments, for the King
Will bind thee by such vows, as is a shame
A man should not be bound by, yet the which
No man can keep; but, so thou dread to swear,
Pass not beneath this gateway, but abide
Without, among the cattle of the field."¹

II

Christianity asserts about sex two great constructive principles, principles that are bound up with its belief in the absolute value of human personality and its synthesis of spiritual and material. It says,

¹ For the simile I am indebted to one of G. A. Studdert-Kennedy's addresses.

on the one hand, that men and women are complementary, each sex filling up that which is lacking in the other, and each with its own contribution to make to the common good of human living. Sex is, in fact, "part of the great rhythm of life, running through all the higher creation."¹ "Human-kind has been created male and female, and those of different sex can and must help each other in a manner impossible for those of the same sex. That is the glory of the world and its shame." And it is noteworthy that many of the finest men and women, who have contributed much to the life of their generations, have found in Christ their ideal of man and of woman. He appeals to what is feminine in woman as well as to what is virile in man. And it is, in the last resort, His teaching and His principles that have at length won an almost universal recognition of women's special worth and work in the world to-day.

The other great Christian principle is that, in all personal relationships between men and women, sex is sacramental. By "sacramental" I mean this: that that physical something which marks off the relationships between man and woman from those between man and man or woman and woman is never, ideally, *merely* physical or sensuous, but always a symbol, a token, an expression of a deeper moral and spiritual relationship. This view of sex contact is inherent in Christian thinking which, with Christ, sees all the visible world as the expression of infinite mind, and man's body as the expression of man's

¹ Miss Maude Royden, *Sex and Common Sense*, p. 31. The book is full of clear and beautiful thinking.

soul. On this view love means a spiritual union, of which marriage is the supreme sacrament. Here, at its highest and noblest, is "the instinct to create, going forth in the power of love, proving to us day by day that only love can create, bringing us nearer to the Divine power, who is Love, and who created the heaven and the earth."¹ Any physical passion which is enjoyed as an end in itself, and is no sacrament of true love, is a revolting and degrading thing, akin to—indeed lower than—the intercourse of animals.

III

This kind of Christian sacramentalism is the only safe guide in sex relationships of every kind. It is the source and strength of that quiet chivalry in every-day intercourse which is still the birthright, and often the practice, of the ordinary Englishman. It seems to me mere churlishness to argue, as men sometimes argue, that the women of our day have claimed to enjoy men's rights and to do men's work, therefore let them take their chance in life's rough and tumble, without special favour or consideration. Whatever deserved equality of work and status they may have attained, they still remain in a real sense the "weaker sex," and should be conceded that "courtesy of strength to weakness" which is the essence of true chivalry. It is good to see men show this chivalry in tube or 'bus; and I read once with peculiar pleasure the testimony of a German woman in the post-war years occupied area to this characteristic of Englishmen. "I saw," she says,

¹ M. Royden.

"an English officer of high rank rise from his seat in a tramway-car and help a burdened old woman up the steps into his vacant seat. I saw him dispose of her bundle—such attentions as no German officer would bestow upon any woman—and I went home to marvel. As time went on we women found it was the ordinary behaviour of your officers."¹

This Christian sacramentalism is, further, the guiding principle in all true friendships between men and women. It is probably true to say that such friendship, which is one of the most beautiful and wonderful things in human experience, is more possible to-day than it has ever been before. In the days of our fathers and grandfathers it was thought very important that the relations between men and women should always be what was called "proper," with the result that they often became self-conscious, stilted, affected, and even stupid. In our day there is a strong reaction against those Victorian ideas and manners. This reaction is very natural, and much of it is sane and sound. The relation between the sexes to-day is often that of a healthy, happy, clean comradeship, easy and unembarrassed, born of sport or some other rational joint interest, a thing of the open air, metaphorically as well as literally. And there are many men who have cause to bless a blameless friendship with a good woman. But if some profit by this new liberty, others, it must be confessed, have shown themselves less worthy of it. It is all too easy for the man of to-day to fall below the standard which is planted in the conscience and instinct of every true gentleman. There is much—

¹ From *England*, by an Overseas Englishman.

too much—in modern life to make men think that women are in the world just to minister to their amusement and gratification, and to make women acquiesce in that idea. There are those who deliberately give effect to that bestial conception, with a hideous indifference, or a fatal blindness, to the degradation thereby involved for womanhood as well as manhood. There are others who, without descending to vice, have half-unconsciously allowed their thought of the man and woman relationship to be lowered and coarsened. Influenced by the presentment of life which they see at many theatres and cinemas, and in a certain type of novel, they learn to think of love as something easy, exciting, pleasurable, irresponsible, unfettered by ordinary restraints, something to be gazed at, feasted on, dissected, toyed with; and so they come to play with love in their own experience, and thus both work grievous hurt on other lives, and for themselves, fritter away in little bits, cheaply and unthinkingly, that which is the very highest thing in all the capacity and heritage of their manhood. This is the real harm in flirtation—flirtation that is something more than merely “innocent.” It takes without giving; or it gives that which it has no right to give. By separating physical from spiritual it exploits and degrades human personality. Far otherwise is it with the man who is mindful of the dictates of true chivalry. His whole thought of womanhood is on a different level, breathes another atmosphere. For him, love is a high and holy thing, to be revered, not played with. For him, all that womanhood is and may be, the tender grace and

charm, the beauty of form and face, the appeal of her dependence, the subtle surprises of her companionship, the ministries of her sympathy, the wonder of her friendship, the selfless glory of her love—all this he sees to be God's sheer gift for the blessing of humanity. Something of this vision, this instinct, will be at the back of his mind in all his contact with the women he knows and sees: And, therefore, his one guiding principle as he meets and mixes with them will be—*reverence*. The foundation of all true friendship, between man and man, and woman and woman, and most of all between man and woman, is reverence for human personality.¹

He who has learnt to see all sex relationships in this light and from this angle will have a sure principle to guide him in the great experience of courtship and marriage. He will know how to fill up "love" with its true content, and will have no truck with the lust which borrows love's name and walks in its guise. It was Jesus and His new order of goodness that first set love free from lust; and it is He, and His, who to-day are strong to resist any attempts to reduce love again to that ancient and "terrible slavery. Because love is sacramental, and linked with the love of God, marriage is manifestly the highest and most sacred relationship into which two human beings can enter. It is of necessity permanent not only because of the deep-down human desire for stability in personal relationships, but even more because the mutual giving of two personalities

¹ This passage is taken with some alteration and addition, from the writer's *Knights in Armour*.

cannot in the nature of the case be temporary; when love gives it gives for ever and not for a time. Moreover, this mutual giving issues, normally, in the inevitably permanent responsibilities of family life. The Marriage Service emphasizes and symbolizes the fact that this permanence cannot be ensured nor these responsibilities duly discharged unless the human love is shot through and through with the love of God. As Miss Royden beautifully says, "We want our love to be divine before we can undertake the whole happiness of another human being."

But what of the failures? What of the terribly numerous instances where there never was any real love between the two joined together, or where that love has been killed and the marriage bond has become a mockery? What is the Christian to think, or do, when confronted by these disasters? Let it be said clearly that, where there is failure of any kind, the Christian has no alternative but to go all conceivable lengths in the effort to forbear and forgive, to mend and heal and repair and restore. Such effort is due to the community; for marriage is a social thing, and the community is deeply concerned in its success or in its failure. And it is dictated by the Christian law of forgiveness, even as it is rendered more hopeful by the power of Christianity to transform and uplift. With patient and honest endeavour there may be, in this way, and there often is, at least a partial rebuilding of what threatened to be complete ruin. Where, however, after such honest attempt, or owing to irreparable circumstance, there is still complete and utter failure, then there should surely be release.¹ What

¹ In a properly ordered society such a release would *not* be, as it

good can come of pretending that a marriage is real and sacred *when it is not?*¹

IV

Two things may be said in conclusion. One is this: that neither marriage nor its debased counterfeits are the only outlet for the sexual instinct. It is precisely there that we human beings differ from the animals. Modern psychologists are probably right in tracing a close connection between our sex instincts and our creative, artistic, and even religious, capacities. There is something in man that craves to create, to express; and, even in our semi-pagan, semi-civilized Western world, there are hundreds of fields of useful and beneficent human activity in which this deep desire in men and women may find release and outlet. There are many unmarried teachers, parsons, nurses, secretaries and others doing splendid work in the world to-day, who find in that work a satisfying and compensating scope for the vital powers in them which could, in other circumstances, have made them good husbands and wives and fathers and mothers. This is part of the answer to those who say that for civilized human beings continence is impossible and vice inevitable.²

often is now, "good copy" for unclean newspapers to purvey to the dirty-minded among their readers.

¹ Cf. Miss Royden, *op. cit.*, pp. 128 f.: "What I do say is that in Church and State we should concentrate all our efforts on helping men and women to a wise, enlightened, noble conception of marriage before they enter on it, and not on a futile and immoral attempt to hold them together by a mere legal contract when all that made it valid has fled."

² An equally common fallacy asserts that continence is harmful

Given tasks congenial, useful, engrossing, continence is within anyone's grasp, "without exhaustion and without asceticism." The appeal of sexuality is infinitely reinforced when it clamours at tired and empty minds.

The strong and decisive part of the idealist's answer to the "realist" in sexual questions is the assertion, backed by centuries of Christian experience, that the goodness of Jesus, set forth as the standard for the plain man, would be outrageously impossible were it not *infectious*. We cannot copy it but we can catch it: catch it simply by spending time in His company. This is no mere optimistic theory: it is tested fact. Men and women in every generation have found in Him, as they still find in Him, the power-centre of purity. Sex is no problem, no obsession, no tyrant when *He* is seen and known; He is, always, the liberator, the purifier, the transformer; there is an uncounted number of men and women alive to-day whose mind and body have been "made clean by His body," who have "found themselves," as men, as women, through touch with His human, living, Divine self. From the most sordid slums of human thinking and human living there is always one way out—the way of Jesus.

and results in loss of sexual power. Medical science makes short work of this view. Sir James Paget says: "Chastity does no harm to mind or body; its discipline is excellent." Dr. Barton says: "Continence is possible, and not only compatible with, but conducive to health." Dr. Clifford Allbutt says, "Continence, so far from being harmful, is not harmful at any age; and in adolescence and early adult life it is physically and mentally economical. Whether in married or in celibate life, science gives its imperious sanction to purity of heart and clean habits of thought." (Quoted in *A Woman's Honour*, by Spencer Elliott, S.P.C.K., "Straight Talks Series.")

CHAPTER IX
CHRISTIANITY AND HEALTH

"Jesus went about . . . teaching . . . and preaching . . . and healing all manner of disease and all manner of sickness among the people. . . ." "As many as touched Him were made perfectly whole."—*St. Matthew* iv, 23; xiv, 36.

"Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you?"—1 *Corinthians* vi, 19.

"To this day, we know, the entire creation sighs and throbs with pain; and not only so, but even we ourselves, who have the Spirit as a foretaste of the future, even we sigh to ourselves as we wait for the redemption of the body that means our full sonship."—*Rom.* viii, 22, 23 (MOFFATT).

"The Soul and Body make a perfect Man, when the Soul commands wisely, or rules lovingly, and cares profitably, and provides plentifully, and conducts charitably that Body which is its partner and inferior. But if the Body shall give Laws, and by the violence of the appetite, first abuse the Understanding, and then possess the superior portion of the Will and Choice, the Body and the Soul are not apt company, and the man is a fool and miserable. If the Soul rules not, it cannot be a companion: either it must govern or be a slave."—JEREMY TAYLOR.

"If you wish to be well, you must live on sixpence a day, and earn it yourself."—ABERNETHY.

"Several of the greatest psychologists . . . tend towards the view that the source of power is to be regarded as some impulse that works through us, and is not of our own making. . . . We are not merely receptacles but *channels* of energy. Life and power is not so much contained in us, it *courses through us*. Man's might is not to be measured by the stagnant water in the well, but by the limitless supply from the clouds of heaven."—J. A. HADFIELD.

CHAPTER IX

CHRISTIANITY AND HEALTH

THE population of the world of our day is computed to be somewhere about sixteen hundred million. It is a safe guess that, of these, many millions suffer from some form of disease or physical infirmity. It is not a guess but a certainty to say that the greater part of all this disease is preventable and could be abolished. For a long time past medical science has been moving steadily towards this conclusion. And during the last ten years or so this conviction has been strongly reinforced by fresh and far-reaching psychological investigations. There is a fairly general agreement by now that in the conquest of disease the healing and strengthening of the mind of man (using the word "mind" in its widest sense) is going to play an all-important, perhaps a decisive, part. This conviction lies behind all the different "faith-healing" movements that have sprung into being during recent years. It is worth adding that we should probably be right in regarding these movements as part of a very deep and widespread modern revolt in the interests of the spiritual against the materialistic bias of the nineteenth century.

I

What should be the *Christian* theory and practice with regard to health and disease? These pages are an attempt to answer that question. First of all, the Christian revelation of God would seem to suggest this clear guiding principle: that God's will for man is that he should be whole and sound in body and mind. How indeed could God conceivably "will" the alternative—a child with paralysis, a woman dying of cancer, a sanatorium full of consumptives, and so on? How can "Christians" still continue to think and speak of these things as being "the will of God"? If Christ is a true guide, disease is not normal but abnormal and Christian "salvation" is intended to be for body as well as "soul." The "abundant life" which Christ brought, and brings, to men would be sadly incomplete if it had nothing to do with men's bodies. If it is true that God made man in His own image, if it is true that on this earth God actually showed Himself to men as a human being with a human body, then there must surely be some great purpose of good for man's physical frame as well as for his moral character.

There is, in this connection, a fact about the earthly life of Jesus Christ which has a remarkable significance. It is that He attacked disease wherever He found it, as being an evil thing, and commissioned His disciples to do the same. He seemed to see disease as failure in wholeness and completeness. He was at pains to make men understand that God concerns Himself with physical things as well as

spiritual, and that it is within the scheming of His love and care that a man's body should be fed and clothed and duly cared for.¹ It is not that He isolated physical need and ministered to it as a separate thing. He knew, and in all His healing work acted on the knowledge, that soul and body form together one animate organism. He forgave a man's sins and healed his disease as integral parts of one process.² Nor did He ever isolate man's "soul," as if the saving of it has nothing to do with the tenement of clay it inhabits. The ascetics who, in the name of religion, have ignored or despised the body, or even maltreated it in revolting and degrading fashion, have misunderstood Christianity and have much to learn from psychology. Not so are man's greatest moral and mental conquests achieved. As many of us know, from experiences sometimes humiliating, mental health and physical health are very closely related. "A man cannot," someone has said, "be a saint, a poet, or a lover unless he has recently had something to eat." It is not impossible, as I shall hope to show later on, to extract good out of the evil of illness; but that does not in the least mean that invalids are more likely to be good and pious than hearty people with robust health. Jesus seems to have given no countenance to the idea "that sickness is an affliction sent by God in order that the poor in spirit might become more godly."³ He came to liberate human personality from the fetters, physical and moral, which

¹ Cf. Luke xii, 22 f.

² Cf. the healing of the paralytic "borne of four" in Mark ii, and other instances.

³ L. Dougall, *The Interpreter*, Vol. XVI, No. 1, p. 40.

bind it and cramp it; the Kingdom of God which He came to found was clearly to be begun on earth, and was intended to involve the redemption of man *and* of his material environment. This sacredness of physical personality was well understood by St. Paul and the early Christians, even if the Church has allowed it to become obscured since. "Know ye not," cries St. Paul—and his protest is as timely to-day as it was when he uttered it—"that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you? . . . Therefore glorify God in your body."¹

II

This interdependence of body and soul is, after all, in harmony with the great sacramental principle that runs all through the universe, the principle that matter is, always and everywhere, the expression of spirit. The glory of a sunset can never be described or defined in terms of the physical occurrences which are its immediate cause. A picture has a meaning far beyond the mere marks of pigment on canvas of which it materially consists. The significance of a sonata of Beethoven is to be found not in the piano's leaping notes and vibrating strings, but in the mind activity of composer, player and listener. This marriage of mind and spirit reaches a wonderful climax in the human body. The brain and the nerves of the body are themselves indescribably marvellous; but when we ask *how*

¹ 1 Corinthians vi, 19, 20. The words which follow in A.V., "and in your spirit, which are God's," are of doubtful genuineness; they do not occur in some MSS.

what we call a "thought" arises or is stored in a material brain-cell, we find ourselves in the presence of a mystery that has never yet been explained. "We not only do not know," says one who has made a close study of this subject,¹ "we cannot even imagine, how a thought can be registered in a speck of protoplasm, or how a sensation can travel along a fibre. How can matter think? Or how can a syllogism store itself in a cell? There is no analogy to help us in the understanding of this. We could understand a ghost thinking, perhaps, because thought is a spiritual process. But how can a combination of carbon, hydrogen, oxygen and nitrogen think, or feel, or aspire, or be sorry? We look at some minute filament of a neuron under the microscope, and we ask, How can the sensation of pain be carried along this, and how can pain be felt by the cell to which it runs? We look at the grey matter of the brain and we ask, How can millions of memories be impressed upon its millions of cells? And all such questions resolve themselves into the one mystery that spirit is incarnate in matter, that a brain cell is not merely what we can see, but is also something else and something infinitely more important."

Now it is both common sense and common practice to use things without being able necessarily to understand them fully. Many of us would have to do without food and heat and light if our use of these necessities depended on our being able personally to comprehend the science of them.

¹ Dr. Percy Dearmer, *Body and Soul*, p. 24. The whole book is a useful guide to a difficult subject.

Similarly we may safely accept and act on the principle that the mind rules the body; and that the most hopeful way to maintain health and cure disease is to help the mind to fulfil its proper function. This mental guidance and guardianship of the body is for the greater part carried out by the subconscious mind, which oversees most of the normal physical functions of the body without our having consciously to bother about them at all. It is with this under-mind that the doctor must co-operate if his assistance is to be effectual. When anyone is ill, it is, ultimately, "something within" that does the healing, with much or little stimulus and assistance from outside. There is a deep truth in the common expression, "Let Nature do her work." Dr. Dearmer quotes a considered medical opinion which admits that "but for the natural tendencies of the body towards health when disturbed by disease, the art of healing could not exist."¹ "Medical science only becomes possible," says Mr. Harold Anson, "when there is an implicit belief that disease is not intended to happen and therefore is curable."

This dominating part played by the under-mind in the promotion and maintenance of health does not in the least mean, as some mind-cure movements have mistakenly taken it to mean, that the arts of the physician and surgeon can forthwith be dispensed with. Many of the factors in disease, as in accidents, are purely material; bad drains, filthy houses, foul air, poisonous or unsuitable food, disease germs carried and spread by insects or by human

¹ Op. cit., p. 73.

beings. It is said to be a fact that "colds" are never found in the Arctic regions, or where there is no infection from people living in insanitary conditions. All these causes of disease are removable and will be removed when human apathy, human wrong-doing, and human ignorance cease, and men learn to co-operate with God to make His will effective in the world. And the material factor is not confined to physical environment. There are constantly, in men's bodies, obstructions that may be removed, poisons counteracted, mendings and adjustments and joinings manipulated by the surgeon's skill or the physician's prescription; all such material assistance having, as already suggested, the main purpose of co-operating with Nature's own healing forces. It is both unscientific and un-Christian to suppose any antithesis between "spiritual healing" and the work of the medical profession.

Of recent years much investigation has been made of a further and even more effective way in which the under-mind can be assisted to carry on its health-giving work, and that is the way of what is known as "suggestion." There are many kinds of "suggestion" that come within the experience of all of us. Constantly seen advertisements, not perhaps consciously noticed, make a "suggestion" to our minds on the strength of which we buy a certain soap or travel by a certain route. From newspapers, from common talk, from the observed habits and practices of other people, we frequently receive "suggestions" which, without our realizing it, profoundly modify our own thought and con-

duct. This extreme susceptibility of the under-mind has for a long time been utilized by doctors in the interests of health and healing; the scientific application of deliberate suggestion to another mind, both in hypnosis and otherwise, has already proved, in the hands of a skilful practitioner, an immense boon to many a patient. Recent investigation and experiment have gone further, and have shown that it is quite possible for the ordinary person, if he sets about it in the right way, to increase considerably his physical well-being, and even (to some extent) to cure illness, not by passively receiving "suggestions" from others, but by himself "suggesting" to his own subconscious mind. This practice of *auto-suggestion*, as taught by M. Coué and other psycho-therapists, has proved to have a potency in promoting health and overcoming disease which is beyond dispute. And numbers have found it wonderfully effective in building up a stronger character and keener mind as well as a healthier body. Perhaps its secret lies largely in its fundamental common sense. As Mr. Pym says in his admirable book, *Psychology and the Christian Life* (the quotation is a useful summary, in ordinary language, of what "suggestion" is and does): "Our own individual experience proves to us . . . [the practical power of 'suggestion']. Again and again I have done a difficult thing which, humanly speaking, depended on my own efforts, because, as I am convinced, I set out with the certainty that I could do it; in so approaching the task I was suggesting to myself that it 'could be done,' 'was as good as done.' Again and again

I have failed at the same thing through no conscious slackening of effort, but simply because I approached it despondently—"I suppose I must tackle this, but. . . ." On those 'buts' hang my failures in rows. Nothing will convince me of any other explanation of my experience than this: in making the suggestion to myself 'I can,' I set in motion the wheels of a machinery whose driving-power helped to achieve success; the idea of success was transformed into successful action. When I suggested to myself at the outset doubtful success or practically certain failure, I shut the doors on power at my disposal, or, worse, initiated an idea which in spite of my efforts translated itself into actual failure. Many of us by personal experience have come to realize this; when we read it in psychological books we murmur, 'Exactly so. I've always thought as much.' But there is more to learn. This power can be wielded more deliberately. There are certain times when we are in a more receptive state for such suggestions than we are at others. Again, the state in which we are most receptive can be induced deliberately by ourselves; we can select the ideas which shall be introduced or suggested for our subconscious mind to transform into fact. We can gain greater control. We can discard worthless habits and fashion useful ones. We can develop capacities which we did not formerly believe to exist in us. We can unlock reserves of power hitherto unrealized."¹

¹ *Psychology and the Christian Life*, pp. 27, 28. For an account of auto-suggestion and M. Coué's methods the reader should consult *Suggestion and Auto-suggestion*, by Baudouin.

III

It is, then, broadly true to say that there resides in everybody a deep-down "force" or "life energy" which makes for health,¹ and which is capable of stimulus and direction. Now a Christian, considering this fact and some of its ramifications, may well ask himself the question, "Where does God come in in this mind healing?" In answer to this question it may be frankly stated, first of all, that the mind can, and often does, with or without the assistance of doctor or "healer" or other agency, set this subterranean force at work without any conscious reference to God at all. Further, it is quite possible for the healing process to be accompanied by what a Christian would regard as entirely erroneous ideas of God and Christ and the universe. "Christian Science" is a case in point. No one would deny that Christian Science has brought new health and hope to many a broken man and woman. But, despite its name, it mixes up with its healing work views and theories which are neither Christian nor scientific. It is touched with pantheism; it believes in an irrational dualism of matter and spirit; drawing a sharp distinction between the "historical Jesus" and the "Christ of ideal truth", it recognizes no real Incarnation; and, denying the reality of sin, it has no place in its creed for the cross of Christ. There are other "New Thought" societies, and "health" prophets, who likewise are responsible for some good, with much error and some evil

¹ For simplicity's sake I describe in terms of a thing that which is, to speak more accurately, a relation.

mixed in with it. With regard to all these movements and experiments, Christ gives His followers two clear bits of advice. On the one hand, He warns us that men may have wonderful psychic and healing powers without goodness; because someone is able to make us well it does not in the least follow that he is a true guide to God and the things of God.¹ On the other hand, He warns us against belittling or despising those who cast out devils in His name, because they do not share our views of Him.² But, whatever their religious views, He would clearly condemn those who, in practice, seek bodily health for purely selfish ends. No follower of the Crucified can have anything to do with a mere gospel of comfort; and that is what, thinly disguised as religion, the message of some of the newest healing movements amount to. "There are whole schools of thought," caustically comments Dr. Dearmer, "to whom the last word of a really spiritual religion is that people should murmur to themselves, 'Health, Wealth, Beauty,' while dressing in the morning."³

What then should be the distinctively Christian view and practice in these matters? I should answer thus: the Christian recognizes that this mystic force in man that makes for health is God's own gift, is indeed part of the very life of God; and, humbly and confidently, he claims that gift, not just because it is pleasant to feel well, but in order that he may bring a whole and fit personality,

¹ Cf. Matt. vii, 22, 23, R.V. marg. "Powers" and "works" are technical New Testament words to describe healing miracles.

² Luke ix, 49, 50.

³ Op. cit., p. 209.

fit in body and soul, to the service of God and His Kingdom. It may well be asked, How far are Christians generally availing themselves of this tremendous possibility? Are not large numbers living far below their potential level of vitality for body and soul? It must honestly be confessed that there has been serious failure here, individually and corporately. Again and again we sit down under the dominance of disease and call it pious resignation when we ought to fight and conquer it. There are thousands of saintly men and women who, contracting an illness, passively and thoughtlessly accept it as the will of God when they ought, from the very first moment of its onset, to enlist the mighty Divine resources against it. Many religious people, when they suffer from bodily ailments, put much more faith in diet and drugs than they do in prayer. We see that sin is not God's Will; Christ would have us see that likewise disease is not His Will, and would have us use a faith, individually and jointly, that means an opening up of the whole being to God, an invasion by His Spirit of every recess, physical and spiritual of the entire personality. That is the Christian's ideal—a God-filled personality, not for health's sake, but for God's sake, and for the sake of his brother men. That motive of service will lead him into situations of physical strain and contagious disease which the mere devotee of health would cautiously avoid; but in those situations, as in all the changes and chances of daily life, his receptiveness of the Life of God will give him a power of endurance, and immunity from illness, a deep unruffled peace of

mind,¹ a strong, clean wholeness in body and spirit, that will make him a purveyor of health and happiness wherever he goes. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added unto you." In this same connection it may be pointed out that on the Christian lies the duty, not only of fighting sickness with faith, but also, in his ordinary daily life, of taking pains to keep fit, to be at his best physically, in order the better to play the part and do the work that God has given him. We should hear much less of "nerves" and break-downs and over-strain, especially in the whole field of "religious" service, if people—particularly middle-aged people—would treat their bodies with a judicious blend of faith and common sense; if, for instance, they took more care (without fussiness) about rest and sleep and diet and fresh air and exercise and recreation. It is wonderful what a run before breakfast, or some good exercises before and after the bath, will do not only for the digestion, but for a man's prayer capacity.

It must be admitted that these aspects of Christian living and Christian service have not always been duly emphasized by the Church, which has preached a "salvation" that has had little to do with the body or bodily conditions; hence the enormous success of healing movements outside the Church. There are, at last, welcome signs of a change coming. And it may come to pass, in a generation, if the

¹ The late William James, the great psychologist, has said "The sovereign cure for worry is religious faith." Cf. *Creative Prayer*, p. 32: "To the soul that is wholly bent upon God, a thousand fretting cares and vexing problems which tear the lives of others in pieces simply cease to exist."

Church can be true to Christ and swift to meet men's needs, that religion and science will at last work hand in hand in the conquest of disease and the betterment of all physical life.¹

IV

At this point a question emerges to which an answer must be sought. If, as has been strongly asserted, health is God's Will, then why is there so much disease? And why do Christians seem to be as liable to illness as other people? The plain and obvious answer is that a vast proportion of the people in the world, through wilful wrong-doing or through ignorance, are living out of harmony with the Will of God and disobeying those laws, moral and physical, which condition soundness in body and mind. It is safe to say that all the disease in the world is due to sin or ignorance or to a blend of both. Indeed, as Mr. Anson points out, ignorance is often more terribly punished than sin; and the guiltless suffer with the guilty. "The bad building of the Tower of Siloam does mean that it falls

¹ For a discussion of Spiritual Healing and the Church, the reader is referred to Dr. Dearmer's book, already quoted; also to the Report of the 1920 Lambeth Conference, pp. 42 f., 122 f.

Cf. an article by the Rev. Dr. S. McComb in the *Contemporary Review*, April 1922, in the course of which he says: "One of the most remarkable signs of the awakening spiritual life of the Church in our time is the revival of healing through spiritual agencies. Prayer-healing and faith-healing movements are part of the modern revolt against the materialistic bias of the nineteenth century, but more specifically they are partly owing to our new knowledge of the life of Jesus and of the nature of His ministry, and partly to an effort to recover the spirit and power of the Christian religion as these were revealed in the Apostolic and post-Apostolic periods."

some day on casual passers-by, and any one, good or bad, may be involved in the ruin." It is selfishness or thoughtlessness or sheer lack of knowledge that causes or tolerates the conditions—whether a filthy house or an overcrowded room, or an ill-ventilated factory, or a mosquito-breeding stagnant pool—in which disease germs thrive; and it is a similar cause that makes the human body an easy prey to their attack. In such a close environment of sin and disease it may well be difficult, if not impossible, for any particular individual to maintain perfect health, especially if, as a Christian, he refuses to escape from unhealthy circumstances; he will claim his health from God in the midst of his lot wherever it may lie. Accordingly, while Christianity does unquestionably make for health, it does not follow that if you are ill you are therefore irreligious. Health is not necessarily a sign of spirituality, nor is suffering necessarily the direct result of personal sin. Indeed the suffering caused by sin falls much more often on the innocent than on the guilty; the misery and disease and death caused by drunkenness or vice or war fall not chiefly on those who do the sin or cause the war, but on the drunkard's family and the profligate's children and on the men who fight, together with those who mourn their wounds or death.

Suppose then, despite a truly Christian endeavour to take hold of the Life of God for body as well as soul, you find yourself on your back with influenza, or laid aside for some time with some serious illness or disease, what is to be done about it? I suggest that the Christian attitude is to go on believing, to

the uttermost, that God means you to be well, and to persist in every attempt, conscious and sub-conscious, to take hold of His life and health. If, through causes within or without you which you cannot ascertain or remove, the illness persists, then for your strength and courage and comfort, you have the certainty that God in Christ stands by you in your trial; He is all the time utterly with you in these physical conditions for which neither He nor (so far as you can see) yourself are responsible. And to have Him by you, on a sick bed or in a trench waiting for a shell, infecting you with courage and hope and enabling you to see your own little bit of trouble over against the whole landscape of life and the great sky of His love overhead—that is the way in which you may quite certainly extract good out of a bad situation. “Thou, Lord, art my hope; Thou hast set my house of defence very high.” “There shall no evil happen unto thee. . . .” “If God be for us who can be against us?” Both Old and New Testaments are full of the faith that sees God in the night. Suffering can degrade; but, as St. Paul with his “thorn in the flesh” and many Christians since have found, it equally can ennoble, and unveil to the seeking soul Him for whom suffering was the condition of His work and the threshold of His glory.

V

I would emphasize once more, in a few closing sentences, the need, in the matter of which this chapter treats, for a new quality of faith: a faith

which approximates more closely to the faith of Jesus Himself. He clearly meant, and means, us to draw upon the limitless resources of the eternal God in something of the way in which He himself did this. In the last resort, our failure in fighting sin and disease is due to lack of belief in God. We so easily tend to think of faith almost entirely in terms of theology, or as an attitude of spirit essentially passive; whereas faith really involves a tremendous uprising of the whole personality *to take hold of God*; it is, in Dr. Dearmer's lucid phrasing, "the deliberate opening of the whole spirit to God, the making of our entire human nature—reason, memory, emotion, imagination, intuition, love—into a channel of communication with God; it uses all the capacities of man for this Divine friendship; what speech and sight, and touch, and mutual thought are between lovers, that is faith between man and God."

A man with faith like this wields a power for good far beyond the confines of his own character. He becomes a veritable distributing centre of the Life of God; he creates an atmosphere of health and happiness wherever he goes; he infects his fellow-men with courage and energy and hope in the age-long battle with evil and leads them on to victory. This kind of man brings more stones for the building of the City of God than all its professional architects and masons of his generation.

CHAPTER X

CHRISTIANITY AND BEAUTY

"Consider the lilies how they grow: they toil not, neither do they spin; and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these."—*St. Luke* xii, 27.

"Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty."—*Isaiah* xxxiii, 17.

"I thought that I had lost Thee; but behold!
Thou comest to me from the horizon low,
Across the fields outspread with green and gold—
Fair carpet for Thy feet to come and go.
Whence I know not, or how to me Thou art come!—
Not less my spirit with calm bliss doth glow,
Meeting Thee only thus, in nature vague and dumb."

GEORGE MACDONALD.

"From sky to sod
The world's unfolded blossom smells of God."

FRANCIS THOMPSON.

"The beautiful is essentially the spiritual making itself known sensuously."—G. R. APPLETON.

"The universe is to be valued because there is truth in it and beauty in it; and we live to discover the truth and the beauty no less than to do what is right."—CLUTTON BROCK.

"O then indeed I knew how closely knit
To stars and flowers we are;—how many means
Of grace there are for those that never lose
Their sense of membership in this divine
Body of God;—for those that all their days
Have walked in quiet communion with the Life
That keeps the common secret of the sun,
The wind, the silence and the heart of man.
There is one God, one Love, one everlasting
Mystery of Incarnation, one creative
Passion behind the many-coloured veil."

ALFRED NOYES.

CHAPTER X

CHRISTIANITY AND BEAUTY

I

I AM writing these lines in the kind of spot not usually found except in one's very jolliest dreams. I am sitting, with my back against a comfortable boulder, on a little "alp" or pasture half-way up a Swiss mountain. All about me is the fragrance of the flowers and the grass and the pines. Close beside me stands a small hay chalet, with its steep sloping roof and its wooden sides stained a delicious warm brown by the ardent kisses of the sun. Just below it I can see the tops of the pine trees; and far away beneath them in the green valley below I can descry the silver ribbon of the tumbling river and hear its flowing music, mingling with the distant chimes of a tiny church in the village which clings precariously to the steep side of the mountain opposite. Some of the great peaks are visible, with filmy, silvery clouds washing round their lower battlements; between the peaks and through the clouds are blue distances which gradually lose themselves in the blue of heaven itself. My home in England is in a land of flats and fens; to climb among these mountains is an ascending of sacred stairs to the high places where Beauty dwells,

where the Throne of the Presence is set up. . . . These shining peaks and deep valleys say things which even my dull perceptions can hardly miss; up here I know, what in an ugly street I only guess at, that "His mercy reacheth unto the heavens and His faithfulness unto the clouds, that His righteousness standeth like the strong mountains, His judgments are like the great deep."

Nearly a year has elapsed since I sat on that Swiss alp, thinking . . . and those threads of thought are not for picking up anyhow, anywhere. Now, with early summer come round again, I have escaped for one day from the daily round and ceaseless toil, like a swimmer under water coming up to breathe, and for a few hours have fled away as far as might be from bricks and mortar. . . . Surely there never was such a wonderful bursting into summer as has befallen this year, when, after those long bleak weeks through March and April spring and summer have suddenly met and kissed each other amid a blaze of beauty and a riot of colour such as even England can hardly have often seen. I write in a shady nook in one of England's most stately and historic parks; the trees are dressed in the softest, shimmering green, with cool, velvet shadows on the turf beneath them, and between them vistas of gentle grassy slopes against a far background of misty blue where sky and horizon meet. The lanes through which I have passed are lined with red and white may, the woods are spread with carpets of bluebells, the river meadows with their buttercups are, each of them, a fresh-made

field of the cloth of gold. It is one of those days when "in His Temple everything saith, Glory."¹ The beauty of it all stabs at one's heart; there are no words to describe it, no artist could paint it; there is no answer to it save the deep, silent, reverent worship of one's inmost soul. . . .

Through the big west door, standing open, I can see the evening shadows lying right across the wide lawns. Here, within, all is dim; the wonderful groined roof is only mistily visible; the great screen with its precious burden, that divine organ, looms up dark against the faint glow beyond, while through the opening, the curtains drawn aside, a dim pathway of soft light leads towards the unseen recesses of the chapel's further end. A perfect setting for perfect sounds! Those organ notes, mellow and true, send their waves of pure resonance washing along the ancient walls, waves that surely are born in the very deeps of music, and will only break on the shores of eternity. And then the angels sing—or so it seems. From beyond the organ screen comes the sound of many voices, a running stream of pure melody, a rich blend of many-coloured harmony, sequences and cadences of the "unhurrying chase and unperturbed pace" of perfect rhythm. . . . I sit there, motionless, spell-bound, with the music flowing sweetly down into the unknown depths of my being. . . .

The chief snare of much thinking and most writing is the snare of abstractions; of substituting,

¹ Ps. xxix, 9, R.V.

by an easy process, the vague formlessness of the abstract for the sharp lines of clear thought and the concrete stuff of real experience. Of the wonderful, the *real* connection between Christianity and beauty I have no doubt at all, and I believe it is a subject which Christians ought to consider; but how write anything about it without being merely and feebly abstract? That danger I have endeavoured to avoid, so far as the nature of the subject permits it to be avoided, by setting down—not without diffidence—these transcripts of bits of my own experience. Most of us from time to time enjoy similar experiences; all of us are aware that we cannot attempt to describe or explain these experiences without using the word *beauty*. Like many other words, “beauty” is a term that describes without explaining. All we know is that there is a something about a flower or a landscape, a picture or a building, a song or a play, a face or a character, which appeals with irresistible force to our deepest instincts, and which has an amazing power to charm and heal and inspire and bless. We call this something “beauty,” though we cannot define our word; our delight in beauty, like our delight in a joke, is indefinable, being joy in “a final good,” “ultimate pleasure in something that cannot be explained.”

II

Now this chapter is not an essay on the meaning of beauty; that would be a task far beyond the powers of the present writer, nor would it be of any

great interest to those who I hope will read this book. All I want to say, as simply as I can, is that God Himself is *in*, and is the ultimate source of, all beauty, just as He is in truth and in goodness—those “three sisters never sundered without tears”; and that the Christian, so far from finding that Christ and beauty are in some sort of antithesis, will discover, if he seek aright, that his love of Christ and his sense of the beautiful are interwoven in a close and living bond. In Charles Kingsley’s memorable words—and he was a lover of the beautiful beyond most men—“Beauty is God’s handwriting; welcome it therefore in every fair face, every fair sky, every fair flower, and thank Him for it who is the fountain of all loveliness.” These large statements are hardly susceptible of proof; yet I cannot but think that they would be endorsed by all who, in beauty, look for what is spiritual. Clutton Brock, whose teaching on beauty and art, and their relation to religion, has justly made a deep impression on many minds to-day, boldly claims that all true perception of beauty depends on a sense of the *personal* in nature, that the real significance of an artist’s work lies in his attempt “to express the personal in that which is not himself,” and that “our joy in his art is a joy in that sense of the personal everywhere which he communicates to us.”¹ The myths and fancies about water-nymphs and fairies bring us, he claims, closer to the heart of things than scientific definitions and æsthetic analysis.

¹ See his valuable essay on “Spiritual Experience,” in *The Spirit*, ed. by B. H. Streeter.

But if Nature is in any sense "personal," what else can this personal quality be but an expression, in terms of Beauty, of the living, loving, eternal God? If the pattern of the lily, the exquisite wings of the butterfly, the unpaintable glories of the sunset, seem to show design, whose design is it but His? If they suggest some Mind, beyond our little minds, to take delight in them, whose is the Mind, whose the delight, but His? Not indeed that Nature, or beauty, can ever be a complete and adequate expression of what God is; for that there was needed the further, fuller revelation in a human life. But if the Christian outlook on God and the world is the true one, then (to use for once a theological term) God is "immanent" in His creation, and there is a real sense in which the flower, the sunset, the picture, the building, the music are actually expressions of His Spirit. "If He exists at all, the uttermost beauty, the most extreme enchantment, must be His." The Bible is full of this conception. The growing knowledge of God brought with it a keen sense of His manifestation in nature: "He cutteth out rivers among the rocks; and His eye seeth every precious thing";¹ "O Lord, how manifold are Thy works! in wisdom hast Thou made them all; the earth is full of Thy riches";²—the Psalms are full of such passages. "Then was I (the 'Wisdom' of God, personified) by Him (in His creative work) as a master workman . . . rejoicing in His habitable earth";³ and St. Paul carries the same thought further: "All things have been created by Him (Christ) and for

¹ Job xxviii, 10.² Ps. civ, 24.³ Prov. viii, 30.

Him . . . and all coheres in Him.”¹ More than all, Christ Himself, in His earthly life, was so evidently sure that this earth was His Father’s earth, and that everything true and good and beautiful had its own place in His Father’s Kingdom. Notice, in this connection, not only His memorable words about the beauty of the lilies, but the eye for nature that He shows in His parables, and the way in which He clearly loved to be alone with nature—it may well be that, when He climbed the hills to pray, He was drawn as much by the birds and the flowers as by the solitude.

And yet there are those who think that Christ comes as an enemy to all that gives life colour and beauty! Swinburne, speaking doubtless for many a modern “pagan,” cries out in fear:

“Wilt thou yet take all, Galilæan? But these thou shalt not take,
The laurel, the palms, and the pæan, the breasts of the nymphs in
the brake:

Breasts more soft than a dove’s, that tremble with tenderer breath;
And all the wings of the loves; and all the joy before death. . . .”

The poet is wrong. It is “the living God” Himself “who richly provides us with all the enjoyments of life.”² Christ, calling men away from the routine of their petty lives into the adventure of love, leaves the pagan far behind in the quest for the true glory of human living; and He sees more beauty than the other in the nearest flower for that He knows it to be fashioned and painted by the finger of the living God. Apart from questions of technical excellence, those poets who have this sense of the “immanence” of God get far

¹ Col. i, 16 (Moffatt).

² 1 Tim. vi, 17 (Moffatt).

nearer to the very heart of Beauty. Take, for instance, these lines by that true mystic, "Evelyn Underhill":

"I come in the little things,
Saith the Lord:
Not borne on morning wings
Of majesty, but I have set My Feet
Amidst the delicate and bladed wheat
That springs triumphant in the furrowed sod.
There do I dwell, in weakness and in power;
Not broken or divided, saith our God!
In your strait garden plot I come to flower:
About your porch My Vine,
Meek, fruitful, doth entwine;
Waits, at the threshold, Love's appointed hour.

I come in the little things,
Saith the Lord:
Yea! on the glancing wings
Of eager birds, the softly pattering feet
Of furred and gentle beasts, I come to meet
Your hard and wayward heart. In brown bright eyes
That peep from out the brake, I stand confest.
On every nest
Where feathery Patience is content to brood
And leaves her pleasure for the high emprise
Of motherhood—
There doth My Godhead rest.

I come in the little things,
Saith the Lord:
My starry wings
I do forsake,
Love's highway of humility to take:
Meekly I fit my stature to your need.
In beggar's part
About your gates I shall not cease to plead—
As man, to speak with man—
Till by such art
I shall achieve My Immemorial Plan,
Pass the low lintel of the human heart."¹

¹ Evelyn Underhill, *Immanence*, p. 1 (Dent).

III

This book is about every-day religion. I would make the confident assertion that the man who learns to bring Christ into his every-day life is far more keenly appreciative of all lovely things than he ever could be without Him. With the springs of his being made new and clean, he finds himself in blessed harmony with all the beauties of earth and sky:

"O glory of the lighted mind—
How dead I'd been, how dumb, how blind.
The running brook, to my new eyes,
Was babbling out of Paradise;
The waters rushing from the rain
Were singing, Christ has risen again. . . ." ¹

There is no joy in life like that of walking with the living Jesus by the blue sea, or through the wood's green glades, or in the rose garden. . . . Those are the times when you touch and hold life's final certainties.

"Not God! in gardens! when the eve is cool?
Nay, but I have a sign.
'Tis very sure God walks in mine." ²

That is a sensitiveness to beauty and to God which grows—and the Christian will take care that it has the chance to grow. As towards truth and goodness, so towards beauty, he will seek to be increasingly teachable, open-eyed, receptive. And he will find that earth's fair things will minister more and more to the needs and longings of his soul, and help him along some of life's darkest ways; he will learn with Keats, that

¹ Masfield, *The Everlasting Mercy*.

² T. E. Brown.

"in spite of all
Some shape of beauty moves away the pall
From our dark spirits. Such the sun, the moon,
Trees old and young, sprouting a shady boon
For simple sheep; and such are daffodils
With the green world they live in; and clear rills
That for themselves a cooling covert make
'Gainst the hot season;
All lovely tales that we have heard or read
An endless fountain of immortal drink,
Pouring into us from the heaven's brink." ¹

For those things to heal and bless, a man must keep his spiritual eyes and pores open; and the greatest danger of preoccupied, heavy middle-age is to allow these apertures to become closed up, to let the finer instincts and faculties gradually atrophy. It is a dread fate to become impenetrable; pray rather for anything, pain or pleasure, that will "stab your spirit broad awake."

There are very many points in life where religion and beauty meet. One is the sheer beauty of goodness. There is that about goodness, or at least about certain types of goodness, which can only be described by borrowing the language of beauty. A mother caring selflessly for her tiny babe, a friendship steadfast through bitter circumstance, a soldier giving his life for his comrades, a lover faithful unto death—these things are beautiful as well as good. Indeed is self-sacrificing love ever anything but beautiful? And has this world ever seen anything more morally exquisite than the life and death of Jesus Christ? Perhaps the worst fault of many of us Christians is that we have made goodness dull, righteousness unattractive. Yet

¹ From *Endymion*.

when, here and there, now and again, a human life catches something of the goodness of Christ Himself, that life shines with a beauty that the dullest can see and which even the unrighteous admire. "Let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us,"¹ is a request which many respectable churchgoers might fitly include in their prayers.

Man has always a strong instinct to express his ideal of beauty, both in the life he lives and in the things he makes. The attempt to do the latter is what we call "art"; meaning by art not the inventing of adornment or decoration, but "the whole business of creative fashioning wherein hand and brain work together." The vision of Beauty together with the attempt to express it is the impulse and the significance of all art—painting, sculpture, architecture, music, literature, the drama; it was in the mind of the builder of the Parthenon, and of the writer of the twenty-third Psalm, and of the painter of the Sistine Madonna, just as it is in the mind of any man who tries to make a common pot as well as it can be made. And if this be art, and if the argument of this chapter is sound, then art is closely connected with the Kingdom of God, and it is a concern of Christianity that art should be good and not bad; moreover, it is, or ought to be, a concern of Christians not to allow the world of art to be handed over to modern pagans.

There is one aspect of this subject which may fitly be emphasized as this chapter closes. That is the place of beauty and art in every-day life and in the making of the things which man needs for

¹ Ps. xc, 17.

common use. We have, in this matter, made some advance on the days of our fathers and grandfathers; but one has only to note the devastating ugliness of much of modern civilization, the bad houses and the still worse things they contain, to realize how much land there is still to be possessed. When shall we learn that "art"—in the word's true sense—is not an extra, an expensive luxury of the few, but a necessity for all, "a quality and a virtue which ought to be in everything that is made by human beings"? All men have a deep craving for beauty in life and environment, though many of them hardly realize their need, and still less have they any idea how to satisfy it. As William Morris always pointed out, this lack of beauty is really a spiritual problem, and is bound up with the grave moral defects of the whole structure of our society. As we have already seen,¹ one place where the problem presses hard is in the kind of work that is done by a majority of the population. It is evident, as Clutton Brock says somewhere, that "work without beauty means unsatisfied spiritual desire in the worker"; but it is also sadly evident, as was noted before,² that to revolutionize the conceptions, character and conditions of labour, and especially manual labour, as they obtain to-day, is going to be a very big task indeed.

Meanwhile, without any large change of conditions of life and work, there is much that we all can do, and, as Christians, *ought* to do. We might well make a beginning upon our own room or home, and try to carry out William Morris's famous

¹ Chapter V., "Christianity and Work."

² Chapter V.

injunction: "Have nothing in your house that you do not know to be useful or believe to be beautiful." What a bonfire would result! Some of the bad stuff, unfortunately, would have to be spared, for the time at least, owing to the horrible and inevitable connection of short purse and shoddy furniture—deal wardrobes painted to look like oak, chests of drawers with drawers that won't shut, rickety tables that always stand unevenly, chairs that are equally bad to look at or to sit on. But there is much else, especially in the "drawing-room" or "parlour," that might go at once—cheap and bad prints, stuffy curtains and frowsy table-cloths, vulgar picture postcards, tawdry mirrors, pain-giving wall-papers, meaningless little mats and the hideous vases that stand on them, and all the clutter of futile and ugly bric-à-brac that crowds every inch of space on mantelpiece and shelves and small tables. Why don't we, in the name of Beauty, arise in our wrath and cast these things away? For they make for a lie; they suggest that beauty attaches chiefly to useless things, or is something you may artificially *add* to useful things; they obscure the great truth that good craftsmanship *is* beauty—that there always is beauty in the cunning shaping, the exactly right lines and proportions, of anything, whether a table, or a cabinet, or a knife, or a bridge, or a motor-car, which is perfectly adapted to the use for which it is intended.¹ If, when he has to buy furniture or other things, a man considers himself inartistic, or questions whether he has the requisite "taste,"

¹ Cf. above, Chapter V, § II.

then let him apply to what he sees the twin test of simplicity and fitness for use, and he will not go far wrong. But, while seeking escape from Victorian "prettiness," let him not fall over on the other side into the dread vulgarity of the deliberate ugliness of ultra modern ornaments and decoration. And what we do severally in our houses, in the interests of beauty, that we must join together to do, or get done, in our towns and cities, and wage relentless war on mean houses, dirty streets, unworthy public buildings, ugly and ill-placed factories, disfiguring advertisements; ceasing to take for granted the grime and smoke and squalor and general hideousness, and not resting till we get the cleanness and light and space and air and beauty which are our rightful heritage. And that not only because beauty is for its own sake desirable. It is also desirable for its magic influence upon ourselves. Who shall say how much of human weariness and hopelessness, even of sin and crime, is due to the grey and hideous environment in which so many are imprisoned? "What," asks Archdeacon L. S. Hunter,¹ speaking of the desert stretches of our "East Ends," "what is the influence of one picture gallery on the worker compared with that of his house, ugly as it is cheap, exactly like its neighbour and a hundred more in the same street, each street like a hundred others in the same town, and in a town like a hundred towns in the same country—these hundred thousand homes from which God's skylight and earth's beauty are foreclosed—where all are using the same common crockery, and the same common furniture,

¹ *The Artist and Religion*, p. 23.

gathering round the same shaped fireplace, mocked by the same patterned wall-paper?" The vitality, even the moral health, of everyone is heightened by beautiful surroundings and lowered by ugly ones. Henry Drummond once said that "physical beauty makes moral beauty . . . a mere touch of it in a room, in a street, even in a door-knocker, is a spiritual force."

"If you get simple beauty and nought else,
You get about the best thing God invents;
That's somewhat, and you'll find the soul you've missed
Within yourself, when you return Him thanks."¹

This dream of a common life that shall shine with beauty is no mere artist's fantasy, no faddist's crank; *it is the will of God*, who bids us look for His Kingdom to be realized on earth after the pattern in heaven. Therefore the dream can, and will, come true. . . . In Him, and through Him, these longings shall find their final satisfaction. For the Kingdom of heaven is the very home and centre of all that man finds fair and exquisite and desirable, and

"in the land of beauty
All things of beauty meet."

O God, who art the beauty of the earth, open the eyes of our minds that we may see wonderful things around us, and open the eyes of our souls that with the poets and the prophets we may see Thee in everything beautiful and wise. Amen.

¹ Robert Browning, *Fra Lippo Lippi*.



CHAPTER XI

CHRISTIANITY AND THOUGHT

Jesus said: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God . . . with all thy mind."—*St. Mark* xii, 30.

"May the God of our Lord Jesus Christ grant you the spirit of wisdom . . . illuminating the eyes of your heart so that you can understand the hope to which He calls us."—*Ephesians* i, 17 (Moffatt's version).

"We, the Church, like you (scientists), have our foothold in the real world, and are seekers after Truth. There is more than one path up the Hill of the Lord. It is only at the top that the paths meet, but we are engaged upon the same quest."—DEAN INGE.

"The Lord hath more light and truth yet to break forth."—JOHN ROBINSON to the Pilgrim Fathers.

"It is not the truth that a man possesses, or believes he possesses, but the honest pains he has taken to get at the truth, which makes a man's worth. For it is not by the possession of truth, but by the search after it, that his powers are extended, in which alone his ever-growing perfection consists. . . . If God held all truth in His right hand, and in His left hand simply the ever-active endeavour after truth—even with the condition that I should ever err—and said to me, 'Choose!' I should humbly incline to His left, and say, 'Father, give! for perfect truth is, surely, for Thee alone!' "—LESSING.

CHAPTER XI

CHRISTIANITY AND THOUGHT

I

THE title of this chapter is in a certain sense descriptive of the whole book, inasmuch as the book represents an attempt to think out the application of Christianity to common life. But it is of set purpose that a separate chapter is devoted to the topic indicated, for the simple reason that, in practice, religion and thinking are often kept apart. Instincts, emotions, habits, friendships, circumstances—all these are frequent factors in determining the nature of a man's religion. But the factor of sheer, hard thinking is not commonly allowed the place which it ought to have. And, unless it is given that place, "every-day religion" is liable to be deflected from its sane and Christian course by the side-winds of folly, prejudice and delusion.

There are various causes at work to foster this severance between a man's spiritual life and his mental activities. For instance, there still exist religious people who, in religion, belittle and distrust intellectual processes; they imagine an antithesis between "faith" and reason, and think it a "holy" thing to exalt the former at the expense

of the latter. They seem to forget that God made the mind, and that "faith" involves a movement of the whole personality, with will, feelings and intellect blending in one personal process. Then, again, there are certain people who engage in ordinary affairs with intelligence and even ability, but who never think of applying their mind to their religion as they do to their business. They would probably accept the name Christian, but it does not seem to occur to them to take the trouble to *understand* their religion in the sort of way in which they seek to understand the running of a business, the working of a motor-car or the art of golf. Perhaps the real root of the trouble is the ordinary Britisher's intense dislike of thinking. We take most things, including religion, as a matter of course. A comment in a recent novel might be appropriately addressed to any Englishman: "It looks to me as if you take your morality, like your dinner, as a matter of course; it's always there; you don't have to bother after it; you don't really know how it comes, or what it is worth."¹ We are not, as a nation, devoid of practical capacity, and we have a great knack of finding practical solutions for pressing problems; but the idea of probing through the familiar into the immensities behind is one that fills most of us, especially in religious things, with distaste and dismay.

Yet the most simple-minded Christian will find it well to do some thinking in his religion. He will never, otherwise, see half its glories or appreciate the secrets of its strength. He will remain blind

¹ *The Good Comrade*, by Una L. Silberrad.

to the great fact that Christianity is ultimately *rational*. Not rational in the lower sense of being capable of material proof; but rational in the far greater sense of revealing a profound harmony with man's deepest thinking and highest aspirations.¹ Christians have good ground for claiming that the religion of Jesus Christ "makes sense" of God and the universe in a way that rationalism and other non-Christian schemes of thought completely fail to do.² Indeed one of the most significant signs of our times is the apparently complete discrediting of rationalism. It still provides tags for Hyde Park orators, but it carries less and less conviction with those, students and others, who have opportunity to think and read. It deserves the gibe of a prominent thinker of to-day, that "it is hardly scientific to lecture on the corpse of religion, when all the while religion is alive and laughing at you."

¹ Cf. a statement made in the Introduction to *The Spirit* (edited by B. H. Streeter), p. x: "The relation of religion and the creative thought of the day is quite different now from what it was fifty, or even fifteen years ago. On the one side, the spirit of scientific inquiry has—it must be confessed, only after a hard struggle—firmly established itself in Christian Theology; on the other, the leaders of the world's thought have discovered that no philosophy can hold water which has not sympathetically studied, and in its system found a place for, the historical and psychological phenomena in which religion has found expression. After centuries of bickering, Religion and Science at last have shaken hands—and if only they would go a step further and become fast friends, they could, by pooling their resources, regenerate the world."

² The reader will find an admirable and suggestive discussion of Christianity and reason in D. S. Cairn's book, *The Reasonableness of the Christian Faith* (Hodder & Stoughton).

II

Christian "belief" is not to be thought of for a moment as a comfortable settling down in a mental armchair. It is rather, a voyage of discovery, an adventure, a long and arduous quest. As Donald Hankey once said, "True religion is betting your life there is a God." And the object of this quest is reality: reality which shows itself as truth, as goodness, as beauty; reality which is, ultimately, God Himself. Does this mean that every Christian must be a theologian and a philosopher? Not at all. But it does mean that every Christian can, and should, cultivate a certain attitude of mind. He should realize, for instance, that an honest and even successful attempt to do right does not exhaust the meaning of Christianity; that Truth and Beauty, as well as Goodness, have their source in God. He should see that he has a moral duty of testing what he is asked to believe; for "the mass of men hold a great many opinions to which they have no right, because they are not the result of any search for truth." He should understand that the fact of Christ, and his own relationship to God in Christ, are not things that can be privately appropriated, neatly classified and defined, and carefully communicated to others who can learn to repeat his formulæ; he must see that these things touch, at a hundred points, the very mysteries of the universe, and are as untamed as the free winds of God that blow as they list over the face of the earth. And he can hardly fail to note that Jesus would never force belief, or allow men

to mistake formulæ for faith; rather He left them free, nay He set them free, to pursue truth wherever it might lead. For these reasons, the Christian, however loyal to his creed, will never think that he can hold truth, least of all any monopoly of truth, in the hollow of his hand. He will be prepared, if and when necessary, for intellectual suspense, and will patiently await the slow dawning of the true answer to some of his deepest questions. And he will be careful never to shutter the windows of his mind, nor to lose a sense of wonder. Not for him that deadening, damning ignorance which thinks to contain the wide sea in its child's pail; not that, but awe, and reverence, and wondering thankfulness for the glories of God in earth and sky and human life, and the yet greater glories that no eye hath seen nor mind imagined.

"My heart leaps up when I behold
A rainbow in the sky:
So was it when my life began;
So is it now I am a man;
So be it when I shall grow old,
Or let me die!"

And this adventure after truth is no forlorn hope; it is no rudderless drifting over uncharted seas. It is a real search after something that may be found, a reaching up to find and seize a Hand already stretched out. Otherwise this life of ours were indeed a meaningless mockery:

"... a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing."

The Christian life is always a wonderful blend of struggle and achievement. So the Christian search

for truth is not all seeking and no finding, all traveling and no arriving. As soon as you embark on that great adventure you stumble upon this paradox, that as you grasp more of Christ Himself, all the horizons of your thinking lift and stretch. And there dawns upon you some glimmering of truth's many-sidedness. There would be less of paralyzing division in the Church to-day if Christians could see that, for them, there are at the very least three facets to truth, three elements in the Church's spiritual experience. There is the mystical or "Evangelical" element, with its emphasis on the soul's immediate experience of the living God. There is the institutional or "Catholic," emphasizing both the continuity and the universal order of the Church's life and of the Christian tradition. And there is the intellectual or "Liberal," with its fear of formulæ, its passion for truth, and its jealousy for freedom to test and prove and probe and investigate. These necessary differences of emphasis lead to suspicion and division only as and when the common Christian fails to think and suffers his own petty prejudices to blind his eyes to the greatness of God's truth.

III

In John Masfield's striking poem, *The Everlasting Mercy*, the disreputable and drunken poacher Saul Kane is transformed into a good man and true; and he is himself, as he thinks behind his plough, quite certain that Jesus Christ is responsible for the change in him.

"Up the slow slope a team came bowing,
Old Callow at his autumn ploughing,
Old Callow, stooped above the hales,
Ploughing the stubble into wales;
His grave eyes looking straight ahead,
Shearing a long straight furrow red;
His plough-foot high to give it earth
To bring new food for men to birth.

O wet red swathe of earth laid bare,
O truth, O strength, O gleaming share,
O patient eyes that watch the goal,
O ploughman of the sinner's soul,
O Jesus, drive the coulter deep
To plough my living man from sleep.

I kneeled there in the muddy fallow,
I knew that Christ was there with Callow,
That Christ was standing there with me,
That Christ had taught me what to be,
That I should plough, and as I ploughed
My Saviour Christ would sing aloud,
And as I drove the clods apart
Christ would be ploughing in my heart,
Through rest-harrow and bitter roots,
Through all my bad life's rotten fruits."

A great many other people have had an experience similar to this, and entertain a like conviction as to its cause. That this kind of experience is *real*—that is, that "something happens" to a man's springs of action and so to his moral conduct—is now generally admitted; it is recognized as coming within the sphere of facts and phenomena which it is the business of psychology to investigate. The description and interpretation of such experience, and the relation of it to Christian belief, is and must always be the chief preoccupation of Christian thinking; it is the main undertaking of historic and modern theology. And (so this chapter claims)

every individual Christian must use the mind he has, to reflect upon and understand the nature of his Christian experience.

It would obviate much difficulty and misapprehension, both within and without the Church, if it was more clearly understood that "dogma"—that bugbear of the "plain man"—simply represents an attempt to describe and formulate spiritual experience. Man, as a rational being, has to make that attempt, he cannot do otherwise; as Plato first insisted, "the unexamined life is not livable for a human being." Religious dogma is not an invention of theologians, it is a necessity of human nature. Let me illustrate what I mean. Imagine a Christian disciple somewhere about the year A.D. 35, one who had been drawn to Jesus of Nazareth in the days of His flesh, and had since shared the experiences of the little Christian community in those first thrilling years. Perhaps, with urgent tasks to perform and dangers to face, there had not yet been much opportunity to reflect; but at last there comes a day when he sits down to try and think out what it all means; he feels the impulse to sift his impressions and sort his experiences, to clear his mind and shape conclusions. What does he find to be the main content of his religious experience? He has always believed in God, the creator and sustainer of the universe; since he met Jesus he has dared to think of God and treat God as "Father." With regard to Jesus Himself, as he recalls the characteristics of that amazing personality, as he passes in review that life and that unforgettable death, he can only sum it up by saying to himself, "God must be like that";

in Him, Jesus, God is surely showing what He Himself is. Moreover, since those days ended, Jesus has seemed more alive than ever, and the thought of Him has become inextricably interwoven with all thought of God Himself. But this is not all. Ever since Jesus ceased to be physically present with them, this first-century Christian has been conscious, as he and his friends laboured for the new Kingdom, of a new energy and buoyancy and driving power, new hopes and impulses, indeed a new character and new self; he attempts and does things now which formerly would have seemed outrageously impossible; it is almost as if Jesus, as if *God*, had put into him something of His own life and spirit. . . . And what is he to make of it all? Who and what is this God who seems to be above and in the world, and in Jesus, and in his own heart? Must there not be in God some wonderful, indefinable three-foldness of personality and of function? And his experiences and those of his friends—their emergence from the old, engulfing life of evil, the astounding change that had come upon them all, the new life, the new brotherly fellowship, the new hopes for the whole world, the new sense of spiritual realities transcending time and space—can it be that all these things fit in together as coherent parts of a planned and ordered whole, expressing a law and a purpose that have their springs in eternity? For these great things the effort had to be made to find words, not indeed to contain them, but at least to characterize them; and so the Church embarks on its task of evolving language to fit its experience, and the standard

words and categories emerge—Trinity, incarnation, atonement, Holy Ghost, sin, redemption, regeneration, Holy Catholic Church, communion of saints, resurrection, judgment, life everlasting. "Dogma," therefore, originally and properly, is no mere theorizing, or juggling with words, or devising of tests and barriers; it is a courageous and vital attempt to interpret and communicate tremendous experiences.

IV

This chapter, I may point out, is not written for the theologian but for "the man in the pew," or the man who has not even reached a pew at all but stands outside, not unsympathetic, but wondering what it is all about. To assist him, if I may, in any attempt to relate dogma to "every-day religion," I would like to offer one or two comments on what has been said above of the Christian necessity to elucidate and transcribe spiritual experience. In the first place, there is always a certain dangerous tendency, in these matters, to put the cart before the horse. The man inside the Church slips into thinking that the all-important matter is to accept the dogma, however little of the reality behind the dogma is actually passing into his experience. And the man outside assails the doctrine as stupid or mediæval or impossible, without making any personal attempt to explore what lies beneath it. Christianity is primarily a life, not a system of belief, and life always precedes analysis; "anyone who is willing to do God's will," said Christ, "shall know of the

teaching, whether it be of God."¹ Those words of Christ warn and judge all those who, in religion, accept dogmas with a minimum of personal verification, who easily, cheaply, inertly profess beliefs while taking very little pains to act on them.

Then, again, there is always a tendency for transcribed experience gradually to harden into static, rigid, authoritative formulæ which, in the end, only too easily repress the life they are designed to explain and stimulate. As we have seen, formulæ there must be, if men are to define and explain anything; but that is no reason why, in religion, they should so often become contrivances to avoid thinking, beds to rest on, shelters to hide in, platforms to shout from, battlements to guard, barriers to exclude. Of creeds and the Churches something is said elsewhere.² Suffice it to say here that every man who wants reality in religion must pursue it through and behind the interpretations and descriptions, official or otherwise, in which it may be offered to him. No one in his senses will undervalue the accumulated wisdom of the centuries; to disregard the evidence and explanations of preceding generations, some of them with special qualifications for the task, would be gratuitously foolish. Yet there is a real sense in which even the unlearned and untutored man must himself go back again to the very source—and the recovery by historical criticism of the real New Testament, and the historic Jesus has made such a return more feasible for us to-day than for any generation since the first. After all, explanations do not always

¹ St. John vii, 17.

² See Chapter XIII.

explain, and good things easily have the bloom rubbed off when passed too carelessly from hand to hand. There is a passage in one of W. J. Locke's books which, with a *reductio ad absurdum*, mocks at the weakness of third-hand religion. One of the characters seeks to explain the odd phenomenon of a Frenchwoman who was very "religious" but not very Christian: "'Mon ami,' said Bigourdin, 'the Bible taught the Church the beautiful history of Jesus Christ. The Church told a Bishop. The Bishop told a priest. The priest told the wife of the sub-prefect. The wife of the sub-prefect told the wife of the mayor. The wife of the mayor told the elderly unmarried sister of the corn-chandler, and the unmarried sister of the corn-chandler told Clothilde. And that's all that Clothilde knows about Christianity.'"

It is worth any effort, any pain, any seeming loss, to disentangle the essential from the non-essential, to cut clean through the accretions of generations and find again Him who is *Himself* the Way, the Truth and the Life. The truth-seeker will gain on the exchange.

"Let men see
 Breathe from me
 Zeal for truth, unafraid
 Of the price to be paid;—
 Words that once could make Him clear,
 Forms that once could bring Him near,
 Things I loved wrenched clean away,
 Half a cherished creed to pay!
 Fear not, He is Truth, and I,
 If I saw Him through a lie,
 Shall not lose Him when I find
 I must leave the lie behind." ¹

¹ Janet Begbie, *Morning Mist*.

Nor need such a truth-seeker fear for truth. Truth is well able to defend itself, and is only embarrassed when its would-be defenders try to interpose with the violent weapons of authority.

V

It is clear enough that no amount of thinking will enable any one mind to grasp all truth in its many aspects and ramifications. All that is argued here is that the "plain Christian" could and should do sufficient thinking to enable him to realize something of the greatness of truth, to relate those parts of truth which come, at any rate partially, within his own apprehension to those which lie beyond it, and to make some sense of his own spiritual experiences. It is about the last of these thinking functions that I want to say something as this chapter closes.

There is a saying of Thomas Traherne's, that "to think well is to serve God in the interior court." The saying would serve as a good motto for the Christian's prayer life. The quality and effectiveness of "every-day religion" depend entirely on the vision, the inspiration, the actual touch with God which lies behind it; and in that life with God the *mind* must play its proper part. Take the all-important question, for prayer, of the conception of God in the mind of him who is praying. Of necessity allowance must be made for a certain margin of error, where blind and sinful men seek to know the holy and infinite God. But it is for us to reduce that margin to the smallest possible

dimensions by blending with our power of intuitive, spiritual apprehension all the powers of ordinary hard thinking we possess. If this is not done, then it is more than possible that prayer may be addressed to a God who simply is not there. An unintelligent faith opens the door to credulity and superstition. "Where God is not, there are ghosts." "Take heed," urges Prof. Royce, "lest your object of worship be only your own little pet infinite, that is sublime to you mainly because it is yours." The "Christian" who addresses his prayer to a God thought of as despotic, or vengeful, or capricious, or weakly good-natured, or anything other than the God of Jesus Christ, misses the mark just as badly as the heathen with his incantations or the Buddhist with his prayer-wheel. The conception of God that lies beneath your praying is of crucial importance. You cannot pray effectively unless you are sure of God's character. But what God is and wills and plans, what He is doing and wants us to do, how through prayer we may co-operate with Him—these are things that demand all the thought of which our minds are capable, and thought that concentrates on the picture of God we see in Christ. This does not mean the whittling down of prayer into a mere intellectual process. Nor does it exclude or belittle those moments of insight, those flashes of inspiration, those mountain tops of open vision, which come from time to time to every soul that is in tune with Him. These flights of the spirit will become more, not less possible, if behind them is the permanent background of a spiritual life that is mentally disciplined. This kind of hard

thinking, says the writer of a very valuable book,¹ "is the outcome of a settled resolution to come to grips with the great spiritual facts, by pondering them patiently, and painstakingly steeping the mind in them, until it is as completely naturalized in their lofty atmosphere as it is in the air of the market-place. It may well humiliate us to reflect how nimbly, and with what instinctive precision, our minds move among the ordinary actualities of our life in the world, how sensitive they are to every change and how flexible in applying themselves to every new situation, and then to realize how awkward, blunt-edged, and unadaptable these same minds are when we try to apply them to spiritual reality. There is no shirking the fact that it takes a strict and continuous discipline before the mind becomes tempered to the things of God, sensitive to the tides of grace, and flexible in the hands of the Spirit."

¹ *Creative Prayer*, by E. Herman. Cf. p. 78.



CHAPTER XII

THE ROOT OF THE MATTER

"Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me."—*Revelation* iii, 20.

Jesus said: "Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends."—*St. John* xv, 15.

"My soul, be thou silent unto God; for my expectation is from Him."—*Psalms* lxii, 5 (R.V. marg.).

"By all means use sometimes to be alone.

Salute thyself: see what thy soul doth wear.

Dare to look in thy chest; for 'tis thine own:

And tumble up and down what thou find'st there.

Who cannot rest till he good fellows finde,

He breaks up house, turns out of doors his minde."

GEORGE HERBERT.

"Lord Jesus, who would think that I am Thine?

Ah! who would think,

Who sees me ready to turn back or sink,

That Thou art mine?

"I cannot hold Thee fast though Thou art mine:

Hold Thou me fast,

So earth shall know at last and heaven at last

That I am Thine."

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI.

"There is a secret place of rest

God's saints alone may know;

Thou shalt not find it east nor west,

Though seeking to and fro.

A cell where Jesus is the door,

His love the only key:

Who enter will go out no more,

But there with Jesus be."

From *The Inner Life*.

CHAPTER XII

THE ROOT OF THE MATTER

EVERY reformer has a programme; and most of his energies are spent in the effort to induce people to attend to it and to give it a trial. And cynics find an easy target in the accumulated heap of programmes, good, bad, and indifferent, which, from time to time, have been pressed upon humanity but which humanity could not be induced to adopt. Jesus was—is—a reformer. He also has a programme. His programme fares better than other programmes; indeed, it is the only programme of the kind which appears likely to find general acceptance and ultimate realization. What is the reason for this? The reason is the measure of His difference from other reformers. Unlike them, He comes to men with both a programme and the key to its accomplishment. He not only tells men what to do; but, what is far more difficult, He tells them how to do it. His reform-programme is sweeping enough; but He does not omit the essential preliminary of individual regeneration. All through this book we have glanced, from time to time, at this aspect of His unique power with men. In the various regions of human life that have been examined we have always found ourselves thrust back on the conclusion that the values and standards

which we see to be right and desirable are unattainable save by His methods. In this chapter I propose to examine more closely what this method, this secret, really is; for unless we can get fairly hold of it; the "every-day religion" of our ideal will slip away out of reach.

I

The method referred to depends, as we have seen before, on a real personal contact between us human beings and God Himself. Man's moral duty, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," is based on, and complementary to, something more fundamental still: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and all thy strength." The secret of this relationship with God is, in essence, simple; that is to say, it is not an esoteric mystery reserved for the initiated few, nor is it so intellectually complex as to be available only for the *intelligentsia* of mankind. Nevertheless it is missed by multitudes; and it constantly eludes the grasp of many who wish to be, and in a certain sense are, religious. Why is this? The fact surely is that most of us do not really *want* goodness or God; or at least our desire for Him is so half-hearted as to be ineffective. And, what is even more serious, even though we see that goodness is beautiful and desirable, that it would make the world a changed world, yet incontinently, perversely, not once nor twice but again and again, we let it go and choose its opposite. This hideous preference for evil, this ghastly wilful flaw in the mind of man, begetting the misery, the disease, the hate, the chaos that pour like a flood over God's

world—for this thing Jesus, and the men of God before Him and since, have a name: they call it *sin*. It is well to look at that word, not dismissing it as part of the preacher's stock-in-trade. "Crime" has a legal savour, and we can leave it to juries and judges; we are concerned with something even deeper and more serious than injury to society. By calling it "sin" Jesus would have us face the judge and jury in our own hearts; He would bid us see what our blind selfishness (for that is sin's essence) means to God. Making all possible allowance for heredity, for environment, for every extraneous circumstance, we must perforce in honesty admit that "sin" is our own fault; that our hands have built this prison-house in which we live. It is told of a famous smith of mediæval times, that having been taken prisoner and put in a dungeon, he conceived the idea of escaping, and began to examine the chain that bound him, in the hope of discovering some flaw which might make it easier to be broken. His hope was vain, for he found from marks upon it that it was one of his own workmanship, and it had always been his boast that none could ever break a chain which he had forged. And now it was his *own* chain that bound him. Are we not in a like case? And is there any way out from this *impasse*?

There is a way out. And at the entrance to that way there stands a cross, and on the cross hangs the Son of God Himself. . . . In speaking of this matter I do not propose to use the language of rhetoric (as if words could ever paint so great a thing), nor the language of theology—the pedantries of theologians and the arid controversies of little men,

only obscure the inexpressible beauty and the unmistakable significance of that Death on Calvary. Speaking as a plain Christian, for whom there would be no Christianity without that cross and its assurance of forgiveness, I would try and set down in ordinary language something of what it means. I am quite sure, to begin with, as Christians from the first have been sure, that in all this "*God was in Christ*"; that that death, due, as to immediate causation, to the enmity of the Jews and the judgment of Pontius Pilate, was at the same time serving the eternal purposes of God Himself; there and then was the classic instance of the shaping of good out of the raw material of evil. And if God was Himself "in" that, happening (I do not attempt to *argue* this: I am simply expressing universal Christian conviction and experience), then certain inferences are legitimate, indeed inevitable. For one thing I see there some hint of what sin must mean to God. If "God was in Christ" on Calvary, then the wrong-doing that set up that Cross, and all the wrong-doing of humanity before and since, are deep and terrible wounds in the heart of eternal Love. Yet the Cross is far more than a revelation of a passive, suffering God. The whole earthly life of Jesus, culminating in that climax of self-giving, reveals God in action, God *taking the initiative* to bring men back into fellowship with Himself. "He first loved us" . . . "God proves His love for us by this, that Christ died for us while we were still sinners." There, demonstrated on this earth, set forth in a human life on the plane of history so that all can see and understand, is Divine Love, reaching down to estranged humanity to bless

and heal and forgive and restore. There is the amazing thing of God saying to men, in effect, that He *wants* them; that He on His side can never rest content while His fellowship with them is broken; that He is prepared to go all conceivable lengths to repair that broken fellowship.

Is not this the answer to our fundamental difficulty described above? Once a man sees that his *sin* has hurt God and that, nevertheless, God still wants him, then the whole situation is changed. And it is precisely this tremendous change which is affected when a man comes up against the Cross of Christ with his eyes open. As the meaning of that death dawns on my dull mind, then there is quickened in me a new distaste for sin, a new desire for goodness, a new longing to respond to that seeking Love and seize that stretched-out Hand. Incredible as it may seem, He still, despite all the past, believes in me, sees possibilities in me, and will lift me up to try again.

"Love bade me welcome; yet my soul drew back,
Guilty of dust and sin.

But quick-eyed Love, observing me grow slack

From my first entrance in,

Drew nearer to me, sweetly questioning

If I lacked anything.

'A Guest,' I answered, 'worthy to be here.'

Love said: 'You shall be he.'

'I, the unkind, ungrateful? Ah, my dear,

I cannot look on Thee.'

Love took my hand, and smiling did reply,

'Who made the eyes, but I?'

'Truth, Lord, but I have marred them; let my shame

Go where it doth deserve.'

'And know you not,' saith Love, 'who bore the blame?'

'My dear, then I will serve.'

'You must sit down,' says Love, 'and taste My meat.'

So I did sit and eat."¹

¹ George Herbert.

II

If we had not heard all this before we should say it was too good to be true. But any man who refuses to let himself be deterred, either by familiarity or by incredulity, and is willing to stoop low enough to enter this portal, does in fact find himself walking in the Way of Power. Power to be his true self, power to rise to the highest possibilities of his better nature, power to live by the standard of Christ in the common circumstances of daily life—that is, beyond any gainsaying, given to those who, rescued, healed, restored, forgiven, abide continually in the friendship of the living God. No Christian who is worthy of the name will ever cut down his ideal to the measure of his power: he will increase his power to match his ideal. It is not easy, in a page or two, to describe this hidden dynamic which can and does make a selfish man unselfish. The man really comes to live in a new moral climate. As Dr. Glover describes it, “Jesus changes the spiritual temperature and the parasite sin dies, and the natural man revives and grows into what God meant. . . . It is the beautiful instincts, the powers of mind and character that make, we feel, the true man. What Jesus does is to give them the chance to grow.”¹ And this “climate” is as favourable to faith as it is fatal to sin. Faith, in Jesus’s meaning of the word, is no religious technicality; it stands rather for an unshakable conviction that God is real, near, available, and an unhesitating readiness to stake all on that conviction. Those men who, in the first

¹ *Jesus in the Experience of Men*, p. 30.

century and since, have learnt their faith from Jesus, have found in their own experience that God in Christ is the dominating factor in every situation, that there does actually seem to flow into their personality from Him something of His very self, something which transforms character and fashions circumstances with a decisiveness and a completeness that have no parallel elsewhere. "All the early Christian documents are full of this experience, and strain their available language in the effort to describe it."¹

The new psychology has done much of late to reveal and elicit the latent possibilities of average human nature. For nineteen centuries Christianity has been effecting just such moral transformations, though without psychological definitions and explanations. When a Christian hears the living Christ say to him "You can," he says to himself "I can"; and in the strength of that confidence the words "possible" and "impossible" alter their meanings. "In Him who strengthens me I am able for anything";² "It is no weak Christ we have to do with, but a Christ of power."³ This exuberance of spiritual life, this clean break with old sins, this flow of moral power, is, however amazing it may seem, God's free gift to the ordinary man; to regard it as an attainment of the religiously elect is to misunderstand it altogether. It is for all; and it is an experience so great that it can only be described as a passing from death to life—"there is a new creation whenever a man becomes united to

¹ See such passages as St. John v, 24, Acts xx, 32, Rom. viii, 2 Cor. v, 17 f. ² Phil. iv, 13 (Moffatt). ³ 2 Cor. xiii, 3.

Christ."¹ St. Paul quite truly but paradoxically "has to keep telling his converts to remember that they are dead and buried, and reminds them how indecent it is for a man to forget his own funeral once it has taken place. If a Christian meets his old self emerging in some evil thought—he ought to say to it, 'What are you doing here? When Christ found me we buried *you*.' . . . The choice for everyone who finds Christ and is found by Him is not a choice between different grades of respectability, but between living in the world of 'self' and living in the Kingdom of Grace."²

This experience of forgiveness, of vitalizing, energizing power, while it varies in intensity, and for different people takes different forms, produces in all the same solid result, namely, that of a character which grows to resemble the character of Christ. The building of such a character, with stones from such a quarry, is not selfishness disguised as religion; it is, as we have seen before,³ the chief service we may render to our fellows, the most effective contribution we may make to the needs of our generation. These astounding gifts of His, poured out with transforming effect, are not for a man's private edification; any such receiving of God's love must kindle a response to His purposes. "God is not a spiritual troubadour, wooing the hearts of men and women to no purpose; God goes through the world like drums and fifes and flags, calling for recruits along the street."⁴ When God is the dominating

¹ 2 Cor. v, 17.

² W. R. Maltby on "The Power of God in Human Life," in *Christ and Human Need*.

³ Cf. Chapter IV.

⁴ H. G. Wells.

factor in a man's relationships with other men, then, through a myriad different channels, the Divine in him will spontaneously, quietly, inevitably touch and help and influence them. The whole process is gloriously natural and normal. It is worlds removed from priggishness, or a blatant and repellant religiosity. There is nothing forced or mechanical or artificial about the life with Christ, and the service of men for Christ's sake. Character by contagion is a law no less infallible than that of gravitation. So the first disciples found, when they kept company with Him among the hills of Galilee, experiencing, in that companionship, what Harnack has called "infinite love in ordinary intercourse." And so it invariably happens. When a man deliberately makes room in heart and life for the living Jesus Christ, then, as night follows day, sorrow loses its sting, sin is cheated of its power, defeat is swallowed up in victory, and the whole of life—its work, its beauty, its purpose, its friendships—takes on a radiance which transfigures everything. "Thereafter one goes about the world like one who was lonely and has found a lover, like one who was perplexed and has found a solution." If we spend time in the company of Christ, we simply cannot help becoming better men and women; and if we are better men and women, that fact will inevitably operate for good in the lives of those with whom we come into daily contact. Some forty years ago in the South Pacific there was a missionary bishop named John Selwyn, who in his university days had proved himself the possessor of great physical strength. He had rowed in the Cambridge

boat. In the course of his work as Bishop of Melanesia he had one day to speak grave words of warning and rebuke to a man who was being prepared for baptism. The man, removed from savagery only by a generation or two, lost his temper and struck the bishop a violent blow in the face with his clenched fist. All the bishop did in return was to fold his arms and look at the man, who fled from his presence into the jungle, terrified and ashamed. It was in the bishop's power to strike him down, but instead he calmly waited to receive another blow. Years afterwards, when the bishop had left Melanesia crippled with illness, and was now Master of a College at Cambridge, the man who had assaulted him came to a missionary and begged to be baptized. He was examined, and his penitence was proved to be genuine. He had not long to live, and his baptism could not be delayed. Asked what name he would like to take, he replied: "Call me John Selwyn, for it was he who taught me what Jesus Christ is like."

III

From all this there is an obvious inference. It is, that for anyone who wants to make the best of his life it is infinitely worth while—nay, indeed absolutely essential—to spend some time every day in God's company. It is, indeed, "a great art to commune with God"; but the art may be learnt—*must* be learnt, if we are to make a success of "every-day religion." The mode, and place, and hour of entering His Presence may vary indefinitely; He is to be found whenever and wherever men seek Him

—in the sacred mysteries of the Holy Communion, in the closed room, in the peaceful garden, in the fields or the woods or on the hillside. The essential conditions of uninterrupted intercourse are time and quiet. "Hurry is the death of prayer." "The spiritual realities do not shriek and shout, and it still remains true that Jesus comes, 'the doors being shut.'" No rules can be laid down, but probably for most people these conditions of time and quiet are best secured in the early morning. Many of the finest Christians have learned that they could not manage without the "morning watch," and thought it worth while to make any sacrifice to get it. Charles Simeon, one of the leaders of the Evangelical revival, from 1782 to 1836 Vicar of Holy Trinity, Cambridge, found it hard to get up in the morning to say his prayers. He had rooms in King's College, of which College he was a Fellow; and he determined one day that if he failed to rise at the hour he set himself, he would give half-a-crown to his bedmaker. Next morning, in bed, found him arguing with himself that his bedmaker needed the half-crown much more than he did, and so his prayer appointment was missed. Thereupon he resolved that on the next failure, instead of giving half-a-crown to his bedmaker, he would throw a guinea into the Cam, flowing by a hundred yards from his rooms. He did miss again; and promptly walked down to the bridge and threw the coin into the river, where no doubt it remains to this day.¹ I am tempted to add another story of another Cambridge man, Douglas Thornton, of Marlborough and

¹ The story is told in Bishop Moule's *Life of Charles Simeon*.

Trinity, who subsequently gave his life to the Cause in Egypt. I remember as a boy being taken to Douglas Thornton's rooms in Trinity by my brother, who was Thornton's contemporary. Both belonged to a group of keen Christian men, all of them observers of the "morning watch." Thornton, with characteristic enthusiasm, made himself get up every morning at some incredibly early hour. He found the mere noise of an alarm clock quite insufficient to get him out of bed; so, being of a mechanical turn of mind, he devised a most ingenious contrivance of upright posts at the ends of his bed, with cords and pulleys attached to the bedclothes and connected with the alarm clock; the effect of which was, at the appointed hour, to lift the bedclothes clean off him as he lay in bed! He knew, as other wise men know, that it is worth while employing any dodge, however homely, which will help you to say your prayers. *There is no other way* in which to become and to continue spiritually fit. "Would to God," once cried Samuel Rutherford, "that all cold-blooded, faint-hearted soldiers of Christ would look again to Jesus and to His Love; and when they look, I would have them to look again, and again, and fill themselves with beholding Christ's beauty."

"Give Him thy first thoughts;
So shalt thou keep
Him company all day.
And in Him sleep."

Those who thus seek and find God know that the relationship may be described, without irreverence or presumption, as one of intimacy; an intimacy that loves to look up at Him or speak with Him at odd

moments and in all sorts of places—in the street, the train, the 'bus, the office, in busy times, or among throngs of people. Surely the God of Jesus Christ—who runs to meet the prodigal, who loves children, who cares for flowers, who is *interested* in men—must mean our relationship with Him to be of this kind? “Behold, no longer do I call you servants, I have called you friends.” How extraordinary that much of “official” Christianity should have completely missed this thing in God! “Many of the religious people I know,” says “Parson John” in a letter to “Miriam Grey” in a little pamphlet that is worth its weight in gold,¹ “many of the religious people that I know, when they talk of religion, have a bedside manner, and walk about in felt slippers. And if they speak of God, they always tidy themselves first. But you go in and out in all the rooms in God’s house as though you were quite at home. You open the doors without knocking, and you hum on the stairs, and it isn’t always hymns either. My aunt thinks you are not quite reverent; but, then, she can keep felt slippers on her mind without any trouble. . . .” And here is a bit from “Miriam Grey’s” reply: “Until about three years ago I used to think the right thing was to tidy up, and be grave and prepared in my mind . . . but now it’s so different. What is the difference, you say? Well, I’m not quite sure, but it’s something like this. All that time the world was really a school. And though I called God *Father*, I really thought of Him as a lot of other things first—Schoolmaster, King, Lord Almighty, and so on;

¹ *God in Everything* (Kelly, “Manuals of Fellowship,” No. 3).

and afterwards, or with an effort, I remembered He was Father, though even then He was sometimes a long way off. It had never really got down into my mind that He was *my* Father. And now it is different. I'm not at school; I've come home. It is my Father's house, and it's awfully jolly to live at home with Him there *always*. So why shouldn't I go in and out freely? Your daughter said one day that Dad's study had *never* been shut against her. How shouldn't I or you go into *His* rooms without knocking? He leaves the doors open on purpose, because He's glad to have us. I'm sorry if your aunt's feelings are shocked; but the fact is that God is the only one who *never* makes me feel shy, or afraid of being in the way, or not good enough or wise enough or something enough, and I do love it so."

One matter may be emphasized at this point. In this wonderful, happy companionship, especially in the times set apart for "praying," spaces should always be kept for *silent* converse. True prayer is not a monologue but a conversation; and it is vital that ample opportunity should be given to Him to speak to us. It is well to take pains to cultivate the listening side of prayer. "The more earnestly you are at work for Jesus," a wise man once said, "the more you need times when what you are trying to do for Him passes totally out of your mind, and the only thing worth thinking of is what He is doing for you."

For everyone, whatever his duties or vocation, it remains true that life's best work is accomplished in "the secret place"; there is the source and secret

of the highest kind of output. The Venerable Bede in his History tells the story of a chieftain who, as he faced the battle-line of his enemies, saw a company of monks lifting up their hands in prayer for them on a hill a little way off. Directing his soldiers towards the monks, he gave the order, "Kill those men first, for they are the most dangerous." In wielding that mighty weapon some are more adept than others; but every common Christian can and should know something of its use. Our several gifts and talents, our tasks and vocations, may vary indefinitely, but this one thing all can do: we can bring to God a personality to be filled with Himself, to be touched, energized, set alight by the flame of His Spirit. Gallons of cold water will be poured on those spiritual fires to put them out, but they shall burn steadily on if they are duly fed, like the flames that *Christian* was shown in *Pilgrim's Progress*, from the secret fount of oil on the farther side. In one of his speeches Marshal Foch has pointed out that it was, ultimately, their moral 'ardour which brought victory to the Allies in 1918, as it had done a hundred years before to the Prussians in 1814. "Blücher, Zieten and the others," said he, "were very far from being military geniuses. Their intelligence was not of the first order, their intellect was limited, but the internal flame which inspired them sufficed for all." To keep that flame alive, in the campaign for the Kingdom of God, through every circumstance of discouragement, despite all opposition within and without—that is the plain duty, and the perfectly possible duty, of every servant of Christ. And to fight by His side, inspired by

His strength and courage, is the most satisfying thing a man can ever do.

"Joy is the wine that God is ever pouring
Into the hearts of those who strive with Him,
Light'ning their eyes to vision and adoring,
Strength'ning their arms to warfare glad and grim.

So would I live, and not in idle resting,
Stupid as swine that wallow in the mire,
Fain would I fight, and be for ever breasting
Danger and death, for ever under fire.

Bread of Thy Body give me for my fighting,
Give me to drink Thy Sacred Blood for wine,
While there are wrongs that need me for the righting,
While there is warfare splendid and divine.

Give me, for light, the sunshine of Thy sorrow,
Give me, for shelter, shadow of Thy Cross,
Give me to share the Glory of Thy morrow,
Gone from my heart the bitterness of loss."¹

¹ G. A. Studdert-Kennedy, *Rough Rhymes*.

CHAPTER XIII
DOING IT TOGETHER

"Striving together for the faith of the gospel."—*Philippians* i, 27.

"Christ loved the Church and gave Himself up for her . . . in order to have the Church as His very own, standing before Him in all her glory, 'with never a spot or wrinkle or any such flaw, but consecrated and unblemished.'"—*Ephesians* v, 25-27 (Moffatt's version).

"Adaptability to new environment is the law of life, and any institution that tries to remain stationary in a moving world is doomed."—J. R. COHU.

"It is the glory of Christianity that we never know what we shall discover in it next."—SYDNEY CAVE.

"The only question which we have to ask when the vision of a great enterprise rises before us is, Is it the Will of God? What is required of us is that we should yield ourselves gladly to be borne forward by the Divine current which moves about us."—BISHOP WESTCOTT.

"'Thy Will be done' has been a wail, instead of a shout of joyful expectation."—*Christus Futurus* (quoted in *Prayers for the City of God*).

"Trumpeter, sound for the Great Crusade,
Sound for the fire of the Red Cross Kings;
Sound for the passion, the splendour, the pity,
That swept the world for our Master's sake.
Sound till the answering trumpet rings
Clear from the heights of the Holy City:
Sound for the Tomb that our lives have betrayed
O'er ruined shrine and abandoned wall;
Trumpeter, sound the great recall:
Trumpeter, rally us, rally us, rally us.
Sound for the last Crusade!"

ALFRED NOYES.

CHAPTER XIII

DOING IT TOGETHER

I

THIS book has tried to draw a picture of what happens when a man seeks to bring the spirit of Christ into his every-day affairs. Before the book ends it needs to be said with some plainness that there can be no question of any complete and satisfactory application of Christianity to common life until we all set to work and apply it *together*. A single battalion going "over the top" and rushing ahead, with its flanks in the air, may inspire by its example, but it achieves no large or permanent gain of new ground; its adventure is magnificent, but it is not war. If in our generation, or in any generation, substantial victories are to be won for the Kingdom of God, they will have to be achieved by an advance all along the line, with unity of plan, careful co-ordination and co-operation between the available forces, and a spirit of mutual trust and strong comradeship animating the rank and file of all the armies. It is indeed true, as this book has tried to show, that there must be something *first-hand* about all personal religion; despite our mutual interdependence, no person can conceivably maintain or regulate his neighbour's relations with God. Moreover, every Christian is summoned to make his

own adventures in Christian living, whatever his fellow-Christians may be doing. But true religion, however personal and adventurous, is never a private thing, to be privately used and enjoyed like a house or a garden or a motor-car; still less is it a complex scheme whereby the fortunate few, who manage to learn the rules, make sure of spiritual safety while the many fend for themselves as best they can. When, knit in vital comradeship, men seek God *together*, He gives Himself to them in a way in which no isolated soul can apprehend Him; and the rich potentialities of His Kingdom on earth will only be explored when men in groups and communities apply its whole programme to their common life.

That His followers should be thus linked to one another in a living tether was an essential part of Christ's plan. There was no question of their forming a society to unite in propagating His ideals; in virtue of their common life derived from Him they found themselves to be one body, members one of another, a spiritual family with loyalties and obligations more stringent than those of any blood relationships or other earthly associations. The significance of this discovery was quickly and clearly recognized by the "Church," as it soon came to be called, of primitive times; indeed it was one of the greatest things in the experience of the early Christian community. It was necessary to coin a new name for this new thing, and they called it "the fellowship":¹ it was "a community of spirit issuing

¹ Cf. Acts ii, 42 τῇ κοινωνίᾳ (note the significance of the definite article).

in community of life." And in the strength of this divine fellowship, with a sublime certainty that the invisible Christ was literally leading them, and with absolute confidence in one another, they made an impression on, and wrought a change in, the world of their day, in a fashion which has never been paralleled since.

II

It is proverbial that each generation in turn likes to picture itself as standing on the very watershed of history. But we who have lived through the Great War, and have witnessed the process of world upheaval, which has continued with ever-accelerating pace, before and during and since that cataclysm, have some ground for thinking that we have reached a real crisis in the affairs of men. And those of us who believe in Jesus Christ are, we contend, justified in our view that Christianity is the only hope of the future, and that organized religion is confronted to-day by an opportunity to "apply Christianity," which is one of the greatest in all history and which may not recur. But all depends, humanly speaking, on Christians and the Christian Churches "doing it together." . . . As to the greatness of the opportunity, when one contemplates the state of the world of to-day, floundering in hopeless economic confusion, a prey to sinister and disintegrating forces, he may well exclaim that now is the moment for Christianity: if it has anything creative to say, to say it, and if it has any salvation to produce, to produce it. Again, there are many evidences that, behind and beneath contemporary materialism

(flourishing in practice while discredited as a philosophy), there exists an unsatisfied spiritual hunger in all sorts of people and among very different sections of the community. The vogue of spiritualism, theosophy and Christian Science is, on one side of it, a symptom of men's groping after something that may make life more satisfying and put them in contact with its hidden realities. For many men and women the Great War meant a moral and spiritual earthquake; "the fountains of the great deep have been opened," and no more can they live contentedly on the surface of life. "All the signs of the times," writes F. R. Barry in a striking pamphlet,¹ "seem to indicate that a far-reaching spiritual renewal, on a scale perhaps unknown before, is being prepared in the hearts of the people now. There is a widespread disillusionment with crude material satisfaction. There is a pathetic longing for release in the crowds that walk our streets. There is a hunger to find some 'way out'—some new start which will lift us out of ourselves into new fellowship and justice. The sense of failure which haunts this generation cries aloud for the knowledge of some power by which we can rise above our limitations and escape the predestined wheel of our own past." I am not one of those who believe that our generation is more irreligious than its predecessors; indeed there is considerable evidence that it is less so. For example, the war, besides driving a great ploughshare through men's mental subsoil, opened up entirely unsuspected reservoirs of moral capacity. The nation as a whole, and millions of its individual

¹ *One Clear Call.*

members, showed themselves capable of a very wonderful standard of selfless service and sacrifice. The daily, hourly self-giving of men in the trenches, cheerful and quite unself-conscious, was a thing which made an abiding impression on those who saw it. Yet not ten per cent of these men realized that in that experience they were touching something that lies at the heart of Christianity. However little, as yet, they may have been impressed^{ed} by organized religion, none can say that the people of these islands are incapable of answering a call when they hear it, of responding to an ideal when they see it. If and when, at last, they are able, through whatsoever means, to catch the authentic notes of Christ's own voice, to see in Him the fulfiller of their desires, the one hope of a new and better world, there may well take place something like a landslide towards the Kingdom of God.

And yet, this giving of Christ to the world, this application of His inexhaustible resources to the infinite variety of human need—it is just this task which official Christianity seems too paralyzed to perform with any adequacy. *What is wrong?* Thank God for the growing numbers in the Churches who are determined to find the answer to this query. For it is clear that there is something seriously wrong. I would not indeed for a moment minimize the magnificent work which the Church has done and is doing. What the nation has of religious sense and moral standard may well be due, in large measure, to long centuries of quiet, patient work by the Church's pastors and to the continuous leavening influence of many of her devoted members. But

when that has been said, it still remains broadly true that many men and women of our day are fumbling after Christ, with a dim hope that He will cure their ills and right their wrongs, and yet somehow or other they fail to find Him in the Churches. They feel, and not, it must be confessed, without some reason, that there is some indefinable discrepancy between that fresh and vital thing which Jesus brought men at the first and the modern, official institution which functions under the Christian name, between the Christ of Galilee and the creeds which tame and tabulate all He stood for, between His first adventurous followers and their mild successors of to-day, whose chief religious activity seems to be to sit in pews on Sundays. The rigid traditions from an obscure and ancient past, the crystallized conventions of ecclesiastical thought and language, the prayers and liturgies irrelevant to modern life, the flood of talk and the tiny trickle of deeds, the oddities, the inconsistencies, the aloofness of Church officials and often of Church members—all these things conspire to create in the mind of the onlooker, even of the sympathetic onlooker, that what is mostly wrong with the Church is a grave *want of reality*. As H. R. L. Sheppard once said, in a characteristic utterance, many of these onlookers “find our brave assertions and poor achievements irreconcilable. . . . We appear to them like Alpine climbers who, after boasting of the height they were about to scale, take their ice-axe, rope and other equipment, and are discovered later proceeding cautiously up Ludgate Hill.”¹ “Religion,” complains a serious

¹ *The Challenge*, September 29, 1922.

student of modern history, "is imprisoned by its professional keepers. And this has become as true of the Protestant Churches, which owe their origin to a great movement of spiritual liberation, of protest, not merely against the abuses, but against the fact itself of religious organization, as of their Catholic and Orthodox colleagues. The hardening of Catholicism into a system where, for all the beauty of its ritual and the majesty of its traditional appeal, for all the spacious liberty allowed in non-essentials, the believer is committed to the surrender of his spiritual freedom and initiative, is a problem and a spectacle with which European minds have been familiar for many centuries. But the similar hardening of the Protestant Churches, who can neither claim so imposing an ancestry nor rival Rome in its outward graces, is a fact of the last few generations; and it is due to the stealthy pressure of material cares, to the silently growing power of organization and system, to the predominance of the Marthas over the Maries."¹

"Men want a true religion as never before—that is its hope. They do not find it in the Church—that is its trouble. While religion attracts, the Church repels. . . . To many men and women to-day, especially the younger ones, the Church is not a witness to the truth of its Gospel, but it is, in its divisions, its dullness, its unreality, an obstacle, a stone of stumbling, an offence."²

¹ A. E. Zimmern, *Europe in Convalescence*, p. 66.

² A Sermon at the Sheffield Church Congress, October 10, 1922, by the present Archbishop of Canterbury (Dr. Cosmo Gordon Lang).

III

It is easy, and fashionable, to abuse the Church. Organized religion offers a target which the poorest shot can hardly miss. That there are serious defects and failures cannot well be denied; and I am one of those who think these defects should be squarely faced. But criticism which is merely destructive, and which proceeds very often from those who appear to have little or no understanding of religious issues and who never do a hand's turn to help to set things right, serves no useful purpose whatever. And I should be sorry indeed, believing in the Church as I do, if any remarks in this book should appear to have that negative character. I would rather try to set forth something positive and constructive. Granted that the Church has failed to keep touch with a good deal of contemporary life, and has lost some of the weight of moral authority and the keenness of spiritual challenge which have been, and still should be, hers, *where lies the way of recovery?* I have named this chapter "Doing It Together." What precisely is it that we, as a fellowship of Christians, are called upon to "do together"? What are the characteristic functions which, *as a Church*, we are summoned to perform, and perform effectively?

To these questions there is, so many of us are convinced, a perfectly plain, though possibly unpalatable, answer. The first thing, and the main thing, is to get our values right. The "ecclesiastical values," which at present tend to monopolize the field, must be ousted from their pride of place,

and the "Gospel values" reinstated in their stead. We need a far truer sense of proportion as between the claims of the Church and those of the Kingdom of God. The change will be drastic, and will not be effected without effort and pain. Axe in hand we have to hew our way through the entangling thicket of minor preoccupations till once more we see, and are free to respond to, the great eternal verities of the Gospel of Christ. "We must recover the unedited truth as it flames forth on the world in Christ Jesus." This fatal inability to distinguish between the essential and the unessential is just one of those things which produce the sense of unreality already referred to, and which fill with despair many both inside and outside the Church. On the day on which these lines are written there appears,¹ it so happens, a leader in *The Times* which is symptomatic of a great mass of puzzled though not unsympathetic lay opinion on Church matters. The article, speaking both of those outside the Church and of many on its fringe who have a real desire for closer fellowship with it, points out that "their position is not made any easier when they observe that so much emphasis is placed on questions of secondary importance by those who are regarded as the most representative exponents of the Church's doctrine and practice. They desire instruction on the vital, dynamic facts of the Gospel, and too often they look for it in vain."

Let me illustrate what I mean in urging that our first care must be to get our "values" right. Take such large and (for Churchmen) important matters

¹ October 19, 1922.

as creeds and credal tests of orthodoxy, the meaning of sacraments, terms of Reunion, relations of Church and State, Prayer-book revision, and other questions of reform such as increase of the Episcopate, alterations in our systems of finance and of patronage, further powers for Parochial Church Councils, and so on. All of us who are Church people, and especially Anglicans, are aware that these matters are of urgent importance, and supremely affect the fitness of the Church to do its work. Are we equally conscious that, however important, they are after all only *means to an end*, that the Church itself is only a means to an end, and that if the bulk of Church people allow their thought and time and energies to be swamped by the "means," the "End" will retreat further and further into the dim distance? It is as if an engine-driver should spend all his time making his engine fit to go, and so allow it to fail to do the very thing for which it was built, namely, to haul a heavy train to its appointed destination. This perpetual preoccupation with the machinery itself, this turning inwards of religious aspirations and religious devotion, this obliviousness of the soul-hungry world outside the door—this is the essence of the self-centred institutionalism which gnaws the vitality of organized religion. The Church, God's Church, Christ's Fellowship of redeemed women and men, was not called into existence for *this*; it is not in the world for the purpose of providing interesting activities for its officials and a secure and congenial spiritual home for its members. The Church was born, and lives to-day, that it might act in the world of man as

the body of the living Christ, expressing His mind, doing His work, carrying out His plans; its whole business and function is to absorb His thought and compassion and power and bring them to bear on all the complex range of human living—racial, international, industrial, personal; to apply, in a thousand different ways, the healing of the Love of God to the open sores of our distracted world. One of the greatest sins, according to the teaching of Jesus, is religious selfishness. It corrupted the organized religion of His day; and there is serious danger lest it corrupt ours also. He was at pains to make men see that the Church can only gain its life by losing it. Has not the time come for the Church to go back to Him and learn that lesson again?

IV

What, it may be asked, will such readjustment of values involve in practice? What would be the "note" of a Church that was truly "Christocentric"? Such a Church would be characterized by at least two marked features. On the one hand it would be a society of men and women completely and adventurously committed to living, and by God's available grace empowered to live, by Christ's law of love in all the dusty traffic of common affairs. Such Church members would, naturally, share the Church's faith, with access to the Church's source of life; but, in their Church membership, the emphasis would lie on the practical reality of their "every-day religion," and the chief test of their orthodoxy would be a Christ-like life and a Christ-

like spirit. No longer would it be possible to regard as orthodox Christians those who, however "religious" on Sundays, during the rest of the week show themselves mean, dishonest, selfish, grasping and unsociable. "The demands we make as conditions of discipleship are just not those which Christ Himself demanded. He asked no man for intellectual orthodoxy; what He claimed was a sincere desire for truth and uncompromising moral loyalty. He did not ask for a faith about faith; He asked men to have faith in Him—to trust Him. Our tendency is to reverse His order. As doctrine has been piled high on doctrine, and explanation upon explanation, the stark, world-overturning simplicity of the original Gospel has been hidden."¹

For the first great function of the Church is, surely, to act in the world as an "extension of the Incarnation"; to exhibit through the lives of her members the very beauty of Christ and the character of God; and to use her immense spiritual resources for this main purpose. If men cannot see in the Church of their day an actual demonstration of what Christianity is and can achieve for human character and human life, then the Church is missing the first point of her existence. It may be added that such a tremendous joint adventure in Christian living would create, as a by-product, that glowing fellowship, the lack of which makes unity and Reunion seem as idle dreams—real unity "will never be achieved by inertia, but only by action and passion." And, further, it would solve our problems of worship; such a corporate life would naturally

¹ F. R. Barry, *op. cit.* p. 11.

find its expression in a public worship which would be real and beautiful, wholly sincere and entirely relevant to life. Worship often is, and always will be, unreal and irrelevant unless it is an expression and an offering of a corporate Christianity lived out in the outside world; the true significance of each Holy Communion is missed unless it is regarded as the receiving of God's life for the doing of God's work, the bread eaten being veritably "the ration-head of God's army," and the wine drunk "the stirrup-cup of God's saints."

The other fundamental task which confronts the Church in every age is that of *sharing its life* with the vast multitudes of the spiritually destitute. It is a common question, in these days of pressing international, social, and industrial problems, to ask "what the Churches are doing"; what contributions they have to offer for the solving of all these thorny difficulties. It cannot be stated too often or too emphatically that the Church's most effective contribution to the removal of present discontents is *to go on making Christians*: to bring God to the godless, life and peace and hope to those who are dead in trespasses and sins; with a restless love to go on searching for the Father's lost sons and bring them home again, with joy, into His Kingdom. This is indeed "the primary business of the Church, without which the rest avails nothing"; and the gravest question for the Church to-day is not any matter of ecclesiastical polity, however urgent it may seem, but the question whether or no she is at last going to throw her main energies into the supremely vital task of evangelism. The scope and

the call are world-wide. What the Church has of God is *owing* to those who need Him, whoever and wherever they are—profiteers or penniless, baronets or bus-men, from London to Peking, from the Baltic to the islands of the Pacific.¹ From time to time in her long history, the Church has caught a fresh vision of this her primary duty and has girded herself anew to its discharge, with beneficent and abiding results. Is not such a return to her fundamental business due now? Let us be quite clear about it: if we isolate our religious life, if we fail in a Christ-like compassion towards the un-shepherded multitudes, if we seek to *have Christ without them*, we shall, ultimately, lose Him. He refuses to stay unless His friends may come in too.

"He said, 'Thou must shelter all things if thou shelter Me to-night.' Quickly came the pulse of footsteps tracing down their only friend, In there trooped those other outcasts, blank-eyed, shiv'ring, without end;

These I welcomed, but when after flocks of preening fools came in Decked in shows, vain, cruel, shallow, I had barred their strident din

From the hearth where Christ was sitting with the mourners and the poor,

But He said, 'Those be most needy, those least loved, set wide the door.'"²

At the present moment there are thousands inside the Church who barely give a thought to those outside, and simply do not want to be bothered with them; the "indifference" which is always asserted to be largely responsible for blocking the Kingdom's advance, is at least as characteristic of "Chris-

¹ Owing to considerations of space this chapter makes no attempt to deal with the *Overseas* part of the evangelistic enterprise. See *A Faith that Works*, Chapter IX.

² *Morning Mist*.

tians" in their attitude to non-Christians as it is of the latter towards the religion which Christians represent. There are, at last, signs of a change coming. From what I have myself seen, I would boldly assert that there is a growing number of Church members who are becoming keenly conscious of their supreme spiritual obligations. But, supposing that we are at length, by the grace of God, beginning to "want" those outside, how are we to set about winning them? How can we present Christianity to them in compelling and effective fashion?

To attempt to answer adequately such a question in the course of a page or two is an impossible task; only a few bare suggestions can be briefly indicated. Let it be said, first of all, with emphasis, that whatever methods of propagating Christianity may be conceived or attempted, they are one and all doomed to failure unless they are backed, in the lives of the propagators, by Christian character and Christian conduct that bear some real resemblance to the character and conduct of Christ Himself. This is true both of individual Christian witness and of the organized efforts of Christian groups or Churches. The Church will never persuade the world to "try Christianity" until the world can see the Church gripped, permeated, dominated by the Gospel which it advocates; in the last resort life tells far more than argument. In the early days of Christianity it was the fellowship, the happy brotherhood, the radiant corporate life of the then Church that won the non-Christian. And it is futile for us to think we can win men if this spirit is absent. In the

Church to-day it is easier to find an earnest preacher of the Gospel than a Church or congregation exhibiting a glowing, vigorous fellowship life such as arrests and attracts and converts. "Most of the younger generation," says one who has unique opportunities of judging, "are outside the Churches not because they don't care, but because the Christian organizations are not Christian enough to meet their need." And there are those inside the Churches who feel this lack of fellowship even more acutely. Many will echo a remark once made to me: "A corporate life one *must* have; for apart from others I cannot really bear witness to Christ at all."

Secondly, we must resolutely hew down any barriers erected, from our side, by officialism, professionalism, aloofness and general want of human sympathy and human understanding. Many of those who are at present untouched by religion will continue to regard us with suspicion until, without a hint of patronage or condescension, we can frankly and sincerely mix with them as ordinary fellow human beings. In this non-human aloofness, which makes religion such an unlovely thing, we parsons are the worst offenders, though there are not a few of the pious and respectable laity who run us pretty close. The picture of a parson in the mind's eye of the robust pagan is usually "the unpropitious spectacle of a mild-mannered gentleman intent on rendering a group of docile people still more docile." He—the pagan—even thinks, often with just cause, that we wear a special face to match our drab clothes and drab religion. I am reminded of the story of a minister who had to go

by train to some place to fulfil a preaching engagement. His host went to meet him at the station; but, missing him, accosted a stranger. "Excuse me," he asked, "but are you a clergyman?" "Oh no," replied the stranger, eyeing him sadly, "it's my indigestion makes me look like this."

A third condition of any effective evangelism is that our presentation of the Gospel should be both intelligent and intelligible. We need to see very clearly what it is that we are pressing upon our contemporaries, and what precisely we are asking them to do. We are proposing to them, not to repeat a formula or adopt a point of view or join an organization, but to *share a life*; and of that life we must ourselves be very clear as to its sources, nature and implications, if we are to make it intelligible to and available for our generation. It is not enough to proffer to them, without variation or adequate explanation, descriptions and definitions of the Christian faith as the Church has always held it, however familiar and precious such formulæ may be to ourselves. It is vital to recognize the real distinction between truth itself and the verbal vehicles in which, at any given time, men attempt to convey it. To attach to particular words and phrases a dread and final sanctity is to begin a descent into the dreary region of shibboleths and cant and magic. Jesus not only left nothing in writing, He even seemed to avoid giving His disciples final verbal statements which they might erect into formulæ. He gave them not words but Himself; His legacy to men of all time was a Spirit and a Life. So, if we would win men, we cannot

evade the task of trying to see afresh for ourselves, and so for them, what it really means to speak of faith in God, of a life in Christ, of a divine Spirit-given, Spirit-guided fellowship linking men together into a unity transcending all the common unities of human experience. Such a task will demand of us that, open-eyed and unafraid, we put Truth before dogma; that, ceasing to regard our creeds as shelters to hide in, we venture forth to bring faith and life, yea, Christ Himself, to the testing of the keenest contemporary thought and experience.¹

No other course is possible for those who have learnt that Truth is living, not dead, is present and future as well as past, and who, consequently, refuse to "turn life into a scheme of orthodoxy." The new Knowledge of science, of history, is penetrating everywhere, and the day has come for the Church to disentangle from her essential message what Dean Inge calls the "indigestible slabs of obsolete science" which have been imbedded in it from time immemorial. So far as the Church of England is concerned, it is a matter for thankfulness to all who put truth before dogma and tradition that the Convocations of both Canterbury and York have boldly affirmed the Church's freedom, and her duty, to investigate, and re-investigate, the fundamentals of her faith.²

¹ Cf. Chapter XI.

² Summer 1922. Compare the statement of one of the Committees of the 1920 Lambeth Conference: "We have to state, and to state in terms which are real and convincing to the mind of our time, the fundamental truths of the Christian Revelation—a standpoint clearly and strongly reaffirmed by the Lambeth conference of 1930. See, especially, Resolutions 1—8 in the Lambeth 1930 Report.

It is, in any case, growingly clear that there can never be any successful evangelism without such sincere attempts to relate intelligibly the main contents of the Christian message to the living needs of to-day. There is no question of a "new Gospel"; but, like the householder which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old, an evangelizing Church must needs ascertain, and make available, those essential elements in Christianity which are, specially calculated to meet the needs of the world of its day; above all, we would proffer to men not a museum religion, dissected, analyzed, defined and dead, but a living Jesus Christ, who has a thousand fresh ways of relating Himself to succeeding generations. We would persuade men to look to Christ—Christ living, dying, risen—to see what God is like, what men may be, how evil may be overthrown, whence history began and towards what it is moving. We would go to men with Christ's glorious tidings of a God who is alive and near, free to act and ready to respond, not remote and aloof and negligible; of a forgiveness real and immediate, of a new standard for human living and a power to attain it, of a new world fellowship of love and peace, of the Kingdom of God as the final reality, the *summum bonum*, the attainable goal, for this life and the life to come.

Now all this involves far more than an evangelistic individualism which seeks to snatch a few from a doomed world, as brands from the burning. It means we may go to men with tidings of redemption not simply for their own souls, but for their whole environment—their bodies and the physical

conditions of their lives—their circle of relationships, their work, their play, their civic and political interests, the nearer and the larger world in which they live. With such a message, put intelligibly, sympathetically, and with a combination of humility and certainty, we can at least get a hearing from our contemporaries. There is a way into the heart and mind of every generation; and the way into the heart of ours is to show that there is that in our religion which can successfully grapple with social evils and point to the true way of social renewal. Men give some heed to Christ when they begin to see that His message insists on the absolute sacredness of human personality and the binding obligation of the law of love, and that He can actually enable men to act on these principles; and they will pay more attention to the Church when they see her trying to think out the kind of social and industrial order which these postulates demand, and inculcating upon her members the duty of living accordingly.¹ And, in point of fact, this Gospel “works.” When men really discover that Christ is not a sort of cold, ecclesiastical lay figure invented by the Churches, but is, in fact, alive and personally accessible, and is actually concerned with their hopes and fears, their work, their house, their family, their town and their nation, then they, many of them, turn Christian. Some of the more recent evangelistic campaigns, such as the “Crusades” at Woolwich, Bristol, Birmingham and elsewhere, the student “Campaigns” at Liverpool, Northampton, Derby, Darlington and other

¹ Cf. Chapter III.

great towns and the great simultaneous Missions at various places, where the message has been proclaimed with the utmost frankness, on some such lines as those suggested above, and where there has been a considered and successful attempt to make an effective impact on the community as well as to convert individuals,—these experiments have given a striking indication of what may be achieved when, with all its strength, and without reserve, with knowledge and enthusiasm and burning hope, the Church proclaims Jesus to the people of this land.

“Behold, I make all things new.” Such renewal, on a large scale, may be nearer than we think. There is a cloud like a man’s hand on the horizon, with the promise of abundance of rain. The reservoirs of God are opening, and whithersoever the River cometh there is a springing of fresh life. Let us gird ourselves to dig the channels. With a new faith in God, with deep penitence for the past and high resolve for the future, the Church, renewed and re-united, may yet be the bringer of Christ to this stricken world. But not without tremendous cost. It is no light thing to reassert the supremacy of Jesus. It will mean daring and humility and adventure and sacrifice, and what the world would probably call failure; for, as an acute thinker has pointed out, always and everywhere “the Church tends to be controlled by the established and the practical; and to these the spirit of Jesus cannot be congenial.”¹ And on every individual Christian this adventure will

¹ Glover, *Jesus in the Experience of Men*, p. 168.

make a great demand. It will mean, as this book has tried to show, a life in every detail—family, business, money, pleasure, all personal relationships, all hopes and ambitions—ordered with direct reference to what Jesus Christ wants. It will mean also—and this will be the inspiration for our new way of living—a real experience of the companionship of Jesus, of friendship with the living God. If we can do it—you and I and all who care; if all who are looking for the Kingdom can get together and act together on the basis of “Christ first, whatever it may cost”—then things will happen. We who are Christians may yet do for our generation what it so desperately needs. The Church—converted, purified, renewed—may yet be God’s channel for the rising tide of spiritual life which is beginning to flow. And, despite the disillusionments and disappointments of current history, it may yet be that some of us now alive will not taste of death until we see the Kingdom of God come with power.

Grant that we may walk as Jesus walked; grant that what the Spirit was in Him, such He may also be in us; grant that our lives may be re-fashioned after the pattern of His Life; grant that we may do to-day, here, on earth, what Jesus would have done, and in the way He would have done it. Amen.

THE END